



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

MCPB 7/30/09
Item # 12

July 23, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Park Commission

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks
Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks *MR*
Douglas Alexander, Acting Chief, Park Development Division
Michael Ma, Acting Supervisor, Project Management Section *MM*

FROM: Ellen Masciocchi, Project Manager, Park Development Division *EM*

SUBJECT: Facility Plan for Renovation of Battery Lane Urban Park

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Approve the Facility Plan and cost estimate for the renovation of Battery Lane Urban Park.
- Approve the project for competition in the FY11-16 Capital Improvements Program, at which time the priority and schedule will be determined.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

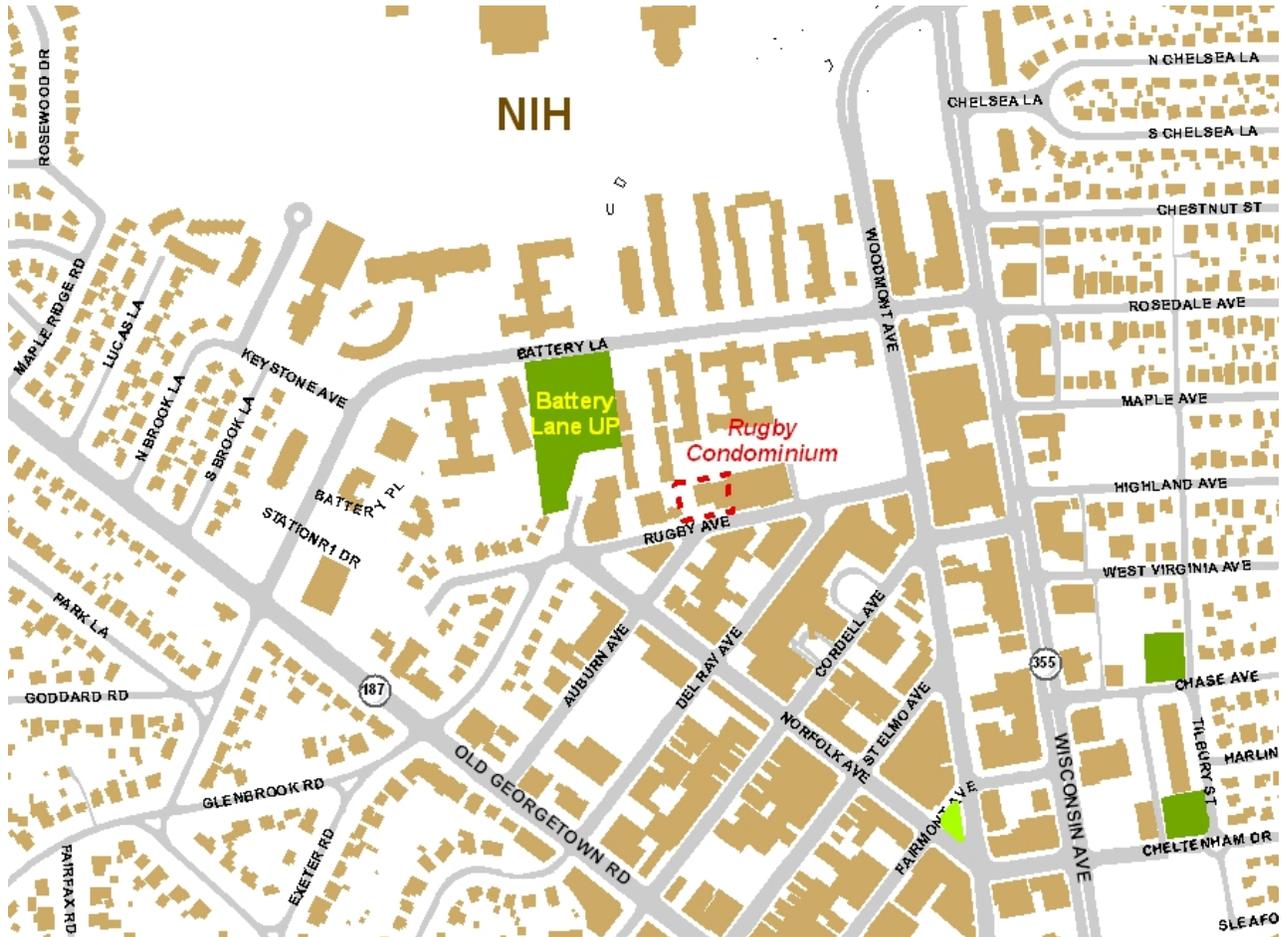
Battery Lane Urban Park (the Park) is a heavily used park located on Battery Lane at the edge of the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). It is approximately one mile from the Bethesda Metro station. The purpose of this project is to develop a renovation plan for the Park including a cost estimate.

Based on the Sector Plan's recommendation, community input, and earlier planning studies, the project consultant completed the Facility Plan (Attachment A), which proposes to retain the major facilities that currently exist in the Park with additional design features, and an improved layout to enhance both active and passive recreation opportunities for the surrounding neighborhoods and office workers alike.

Background

Unlike other park capital improvements projects, preparation of the subject Facility Plan was funded by the developer of the Rugby Condominium, which is a proposed 61-unit, high-rise residential development located on Rugby Avenue, approximately 400 feet southeast to the park. It was required by the Planning Board approvals of Project Plan 920060050 and Site Plan 820070260 for the Rugby Condominium as an off-

site amenity feature to be provided by the development. The Woodmont Triangle Amendment to the Sector Plan for the Bethesda CBD (2006) lists Battery Lane Urban Park as a priority public amenity and facility. It recommends the completion of a facility plan by a private developer in exchange for additional density under the optional method of development.



VICINITY MAP

The Facility Plan Process

During the facility planning process, the staff team, reviewing agencies, and stakeholders provided comments and recommendations for the project, and the following steps were completed:

- Environmental conditions and project impacts were analyzed;
- A program of requirements (POR) was finalized;
- Site conditions were analyzed;
- Design concepts were developed and evaluated;
- A preferred design scheme was presented to the community;
- A final design concept was prepared;
- Regulatory approvals were obtained;
- Detailed construction cost estimates were developed.

BETHESDA CBD SECTOR PLAN

The Woodmont Triangle Amendment to the Sector Plan for the Bethesda CBD (2006) recommends public amenities and facilities to enhance this area. The Park is one of the two major green spaces within the Triangle area and is listed as a priority amenity in the Sector Plan. The Amendment included specific recommendations on the expansion of the Park as follows:

A future facility plan should be completed by a developer, in coordination with the Park Development Division, in exchange for additional density under the Optional Method of Development or as part of a CIP project. This facility plan will be the guiding document for all future development and improvements within the park including other potential developer funded projects. Objectives of the facility plan may include the following:

- *Improve the entrance to the park from Norfolk Avenue using public right-of-way or potential acquisition to increase the visibility and promote safe use of the park*
- *Widen the existing bicycle trail through the park to 10 feet and improve it as necessary to reinforce its importance in linking the Bethesda Trolley Trail and Capital Crescent Trail*
- *Create a new gathering area for picnics and small performances through potential expansion of the park*
- *Incorporate art or an arts and science theme into the site furnishings*

The proposed Facility Plan for the Park incorporated these guidelines into its design concept. The Planning Department's Vision Division staff has reviewed the Facility Plan and supports the design of the improved facilities.

PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS

The M-NCPPC staff team and the Consultant collaboratively defined the project elements, with the community's input, to be included in the renovation of the Park as follows:

- Retain the basketball and tennis courts.
- Increase play opportunities to accommodate ages 2-12.
- Improve the system of pathways for joggers, dog-walkers, and cyclists, and minimizes conflicts between users.
- Improve entryways to the park to make it easier to find and more attractive.
- Provide environmentally sustainable elements as appropriate.
- Improve lighting, seating, drinking fountain, drainage, landscaping, trash and recycling receptacles, and bike racks.
- Improve stormwater management.
- Conform with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines and the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act.
- Provide maintenance access and a design that minimizes maintenance.
- Relocate utility lines underground.
- Retain the knoll with the cottonwood trees.
- Consider public art opportunities.
- Retain unprogrammed open space suitable for a variety of activities.
- Comply with Bethesda Streetscape Plan as applicable.

- Design the Park renovation taking into account the potential future acquisition of two residential lots on the south side of the park.
- Preserve mature, specimen trees.
- Provide attractive trash and recycling containers.

THE FACILITY PLAN STUDY

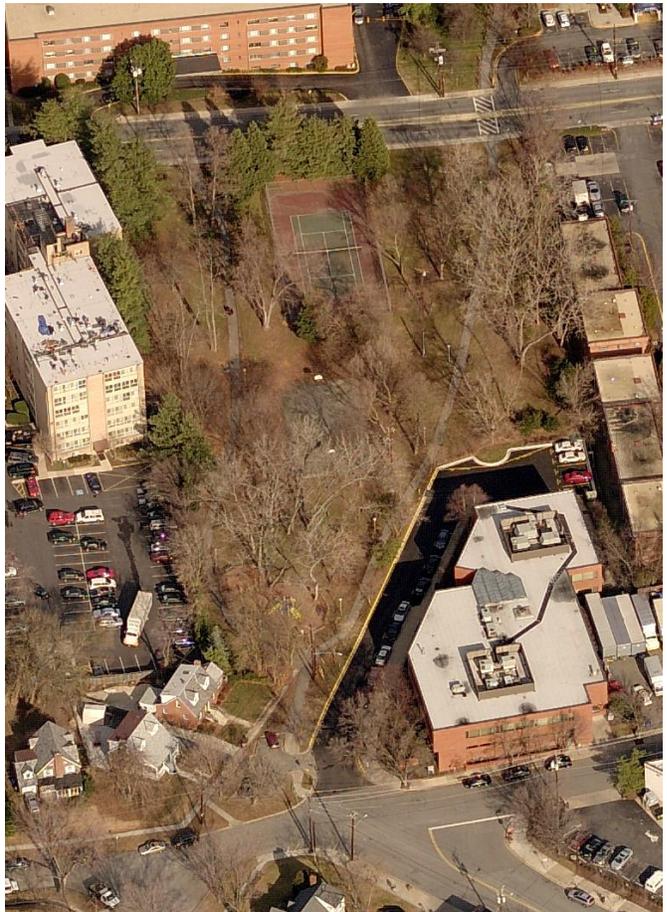
Existing Park Conditions

The Park is bordered to the north by Battery Lane, to the east by low rise rental apartments, to the west by mid-rise condominiums and parking lots, and to the south by the intersection of Glenbrook Road and Rugby Avenue. The existing edges of the park are not well defined and poorly signed.

The 2-acre Park currently contains a tennis court, small playground, water fountain, walking path, and a basketball court. The existing lighting consists of 11 lamplights along the two paths. The tennis and basketball courts are in good condition, and are oriented in a north-south direction. At the request of the community, the current playground needs to be updated and enlarged.

The Bethesda Trolley Trail traverses the Park in a north-south direction between Battery Lane and the intersection of Glenbrook Road and Rugby Avenue. This trail provides access through the Park to neighboring amenities and loop paths for those who want to stay in the Park. The Park is used extensively by citizens who work at the National Institutes of Health and other local businesses, particularly at lunch time and during rush hours. There is a second pedestrian path, also running in a north-south direction serves the west side of the Park and connects the northwest end of the Park to the south entrance.

The Park has a mixture of mature trees and small weed trees such as white mulberry and Osage orange. There is a mature group of evergreen trees along Battery Lane on the north edge of the Park that obstructs surveillance of the Park. They need to be replaced. There are two large Leyland Cypresses along the edge that will be preserved as they are some of the largest specimen trees in the County. In addition, there is a large grouping of cottonwoods at the small knoll at the south end of the Park. The weed trees will be replaced with native hardwoods.



The current seating consists of benches, many of which are in poor condition. The Facility Plan calls for replacing them with new benches and seat walls. The Park is heavily utilized at the lunch hour on nice days. As a result ample seating is important.

Park Planning Study

Three concept plans developed by the Parks staff for renovating the Park were presented to the community in June of 2008. These concepts included, "A Contemplative Urban Oasis", an "Enhanced Park and a "Sustainability Park". These plans were based on community input from a previous public meeting, correspondence received by staff, as well as projected park needs. Community members were asked to fill out an on-line survey during the summer of 2008 through September 12, 2008 where they could comment on the three plans.

Park Design Alternatives

The Consultant for the Facility Plan, Oculus, developed three preliminary design alternatives for the renovation of the Park in February 2009. Four project team meetings were held to discuss the plans. Refinements to various elements of the plans were recommended at these meetings leading to preparation of a preferred plan. The plan was presented to the community in May 2009. Based on the community input, the Consultant prepared a final plan that reflects the residents' preference to retain the tennis court.

Recommended Plan

The recommended Facility Plan retains all of the main facilities of the existing Park. However it improves specific features the community requested during the public meeting process when the program of requirements was being developed. The plan offers a functional plan for re-development of a park that is working well but needs some updating. It considers practical aspects of accessibility, safety and maintenance access. The plan also incorporates green design principles wherever possible.

Pedestrian Access and Circulation- The plan recommends widening this trail to 10 feet to accommodate multiple uses.

Recreational Facilities- All of the existing active recreational features of the Park have been retained including the basketball court, tennis court, and playground. The two courts have been arranged side by side so that the combined paved area can be used for other uses such as community events.

Landscaping- The plan proposes to remove the existing trees along Battery Lane and replace them with deciduous



trees that can be limbed up to allow unrestricted sight lines into the Park. The landscaping is designed to provide low maintenance. The width of the sidewalk and the street tree planting are consistent with the Bethesda Streetscape Plan.

Playground- The playground design has been developed to accommodate children of ages 2 to 10 years old and offers a range of exercise opportunities. It is located in the southern portion of the site near the existing playground. It is organized as a series of event spaces that wrap around the western side of the knoll. Parents can observe the play activities from seating elements that border the western edge of the playground or relax on the knoll that overlooks the playground from the east.

PERMIT AND AGENCY APPROVALS

Reviews by regulatory agencies and staff occurred during the project, and comments from these reviews are summarized below and detailed further in the Consultant's Facility Plan Report attached.

- ***Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation***

The Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Plan (NRI/FSD) for the Park was prepared by VIKA and approved by M-NCPPC Environmental Planning staff in April 2009.

- ***Stormwater Management Concept Plan***

A stormwater management concept plan was approved in June 2009 by the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS). The proposed plan retains the existing drainage pattern with longer swales and provision for more infiltration and control of run-off. During the construction documents phase, application to MCDPS will be necessary for a final sediment and erosion control permit.

- ***Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan***

A Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan (PFCP) was prepared and submitted to the Environmental Planning Division. It is scheduled for approval by the Planning Board on the same Board Agenda as the Facility Plan. The M-NCPPC Environmental Planning staff recommends approval of the PFCP with conditions.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INPUT

On May 5, 2009, a public meeting was held at the Bethesda Chevy Chase Government Center to present the recommended plan to the community. Approximately 15 residents attended. Many of the residents expressed a preference to retain the tennis court that had been removed from the plan that was presented at the meeting. Subsequent e-mails reinforcing this request were received from citizens after the meeting. Staff responded by asking the Consultant to develop a scheme that reestablished the tennis court, which is the concept presented in this report.

A public notice was sent to more than 500 residents and property owners in proximity of the Park on July 13 and July 23, 2009. The notice included a brief description of the project and the notification of the Planning Board meeting for the Facility Plan approval.

COST ESTIMATE

The cost for design and construction of the park is \$2,163,812. The Consultant prepared a detailed cost estimate for renovation of the park, which is included in the Consultant’s Facility Plan Report. Below is a summary of the estimated cost.

	ITEM	TOTAL COST
	Site preparation	
	Demolition	93,444
	Earth work	223,909
	Subtotal - site preparation	317,353
	Site improvements	
	Paved surfaces	84,756
	Athletic courts	127,370
	Playground	279,275
	Walls and Stairs	44,940
	Landscaping	258,660
	Site furnishings	59,600
	Site Utilities	195,740
	Subtotal - Site improvements	1,050,341
	Subtotal	1,367,694
	General Conditions, Insurances, and Bonds (13.5%)	184,639
	Overhead and Profit (7%)	108,663
	Subtotal	1,660,996
	Construction Contingency (15%)	249,149
	Design Fee & Contingency (6% of construction and 15% of design)	131,800
	Staff Chargeback for Design (20% of design)	26,360
	Construction Management & Inspection (5% of Construction Total)	95,507
	TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$2,163,812

PROJECT FUNDING

Staff recommends that funding for the design and construction of the project be included in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for FY 11-16. Developers' contributions to the Bethesda CBD Amenity Fund, if available, will substitute for part of the CIP funding for this project.

OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (OBI)

The operating budget impact of the renovated park will be relatively minor since the size and major facilities of the park will not change. The OBI will be presented as part of the Project Description Form (PDF) during deliberations on the CIP in fall 2009.

CONCLUSION

The proposed Facility Plan is designed to respond to the Park's urban location and the Sector Plan's recommendations. It will provide both active and passive recreational opportunities in an environment where there is very little green space. Staff recommends approval of the Facility Plan for renovating the Park and the associated cost estimate in order for M-NCPPC to proceed with obtaining CIP funding and possible developer contributions to the Amenity Fund.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A: Facility Plan Report by Oculus, Inc.