

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

MCPB 01/21/09

Item No: 3

January 12, 2010

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Mary R. Bradford, Director  
Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director *MR*  
Mitra Pedoeem, Chief, Park Planning Division *Mit*  
Andy Frank, Engineering Section Supervisor *RAF*

**FROM:** Kimberly Paniati, Engineer, Park Development Division (301-495-2465) *KP*  
CJ Lilly, Landscape Architect

**SUBJECT:** ICC Stewardship Project - Athletic Fields at Northwest Branch Recreational Park

---

**I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Approval of:**

- 1) The program of requirements and concept plans for development of Phase 1 and Phase 2;
- 2) A request to the State Highway Administration to amend the ICC Record of Decision to include the revised Phase 1 project in the ICC mitigation package ; and
- 3) The property's inclusion to the adjoining Northwest Branch Recreational Park.
- 4) The attached CIP PDF for transmittal to the County Council.

**II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**A. Introduction**

The purpose of this project is to provide a concept plan for fields that will be constructed to mitigate for those removed by construction of MD Route 200 Intercounty Connector (ICC) roadway and wetland mitigation project NW-128. The concept plan includes two phases. Phase I will be constructed entirely by SHA, and it includes five ballfields (one baseball, one football, two multi-use fields, and one previously constructed multi-use field), along with associated parking and basic infrastructure. SHA's goal is to complete Phase I construction by November 2012. . Phase II elements will be designed and constructed by M-NCPPC in the future and includes field lighting, artificial turf fields, playground, trails, additional parking, maintenance building, and picnic shelter/restroom buildings.

## **B. Site Description**

The project is located on Norbeck Road, between Layhill Road and Norwood Road. The site is 41.02 acres in area, of which SHA owns 23.2 acres (corresponding to the area of single family residential lots in the original Llewellyn Fields plan of subdivision, and 17.82 acres in parkland deeded to M-NCPPC through the subdivision process). The preliminary subdivision plan was #1-90204 which was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on 10/09/1990. This plan was revised under preliminary plan #1-90204R which was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on 3/10/1994. The site is mass graded and fairly level, and is mostly cleared with a few individual trees remaining. The property is bounded by floodplain on both the east and west sides, with the Northwest Branch Golf Course to the south and Norbeck Road to the north.

In April 1998, Natelli Communities platted the lots and common area parcels for the Llewellyn Fields subdivision. In October 1998, SHA purchased the property as part of the planning process for the ICC. The developer had rough-graded the lots and built the roadway (except final surface course paving), public utilities, sediment controls, and some level of stormwater management. The sediment controls for the site still remain in place, although the area is currently stabilized with vegetation, including non-native invasives. SHA is currently using the property to stockpile earth, harvested trees and mulch, and other materials for other ICC-related projects.

In fall 2006, SHA built a rectangular multi-use field on the Llewellyn Fields site. This field will remain until redeveloped in the future as part of the Phase II facilities. The field was used by the Wheaton Boys and Girls club, who had an agreement for its use with SHA until last year. However, the field is currently not being maintained for play. Wheaton Boys and Girls Club's permit has expired in 2009, and they went out of business in fall 2009. The field was constructed to provide a partial replacement for two baseball/softball fields with a rectangular field overlay, to mitigate for the fields removed by the construction of an ICC compensatory mitigation project known as Wetland Creation Project NW-128 (Mandatory Referral 06903-SHA-1 (July 13, 2006). The former fields were located in the Northwest Branch Recreational Park (north of Bonifant Road and west of the old Trolley Museum site), and were constructed in 1968 by the Wheaton Boys and Girls Club with concurrence of the Parks Department and the Department of Recreation. A multi-use field was also removed from Layhill Local Park by the ICC Construction.

## **III. PLANNING DOCUMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan**

The site is located in Planning Area 28 – Cloverly; it borders Planning Area 23 – Olney and Area 27 – Aspen Hill. The Plan has been developed to help meet needs for area recreation facilities estimated by the 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, including playgrounds, baseball fields, large rectangles for football, soccer and lacrosse, and picnicking.

## B. Cloverly Master Plan

Protection of the Northwest Branch stream valley, both headwaters and mainstream is a significant feature of the 1997 Cloverly Master Plan. The Llewellyn Fields-Norwood Neighborhood is located between the east and west branches of the stream valley and is included in the low density residential wedge of the Master Plan. Construction of Norbeck Road Extended was recently completed through the area including the Llewellyn Fields community. Conversion of subdivided lots to parkland south of Norbeck Road completes the acreage already deeded through the subdivision process and extends the area of Northwest Branch Recreational Park north to Norbeck Road, thus enhancing the Master Plan goals for the area.

## IV. PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS

The *ICC Record of Decision, Attachment D: The ICC Mitigation Package* includes the requirement for 23.2 Acres on the Llewellyn Property described as follows: “The Llewellyn property would provide 23.2 acres of replacement adjacent to the Northwest Branch Recreational Park. The property would include construction of four baseball/softball fields, one soccer field, onsite parking, and restrooms. The replacement fields would be superior in quality than the existing fields because they are located in upland areas that are less prone to flooding. Access to these replacement fields would be provided directly from MD 28, which is also an improvement over access to the existing fields from Layhill Road and Bonifant Road. This property would also provide 3 acres of reforestation land.”

After the ICC Record of Decision was approved, M-NCPPC requested that SHA revise the proposed fields to include four large rectangular fields that can accommodate soccer, lacrosse, and football, and one adult baseball field. This revision was requested because of the needs identified in the 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), which identifies a much higher need for multi-purpose rectangular fields than baseball/softball fields. The *Preliminary Future Ballfield Needs Estimate for the Year 2020*, page III-26 of the LPPRP, estimates a Countywide unmet need for 73 Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields versus only 20 Baseball fields and no Youth Multi-Purpose Diamonds. The Phase I development should include the five fields that were to be mitigated for as part of the ICC related mitigation, but they should be tailored to serve the needs of this community.

The comprehensive Program of Requirements for the park includes the following items to be built to current Department of Parks Standards and Specifications:

### PHASE I

- ***One Adult Baseball Field***, with 340 feet outfields along the baselines and about 375 feet to center field (M-NCPPC Standard No. 101 Baseball Field), skinned infield, players bench (with sideline fencing extending 30' past 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases), warning track, and black vinyl-coated outfield fencing (10' min height) to protect cars on Layhill Road and in the Llewellyn Field parking lot.

- **Two new adult sized multi-purpose rectangular fields**, 220 feet by 360 feet (including a 10' sideline and endline runoff areas) in N/S orientation where feasible, with central longitudinal crown with 1.5% slope to the sidelines (M-NCPPC Standard No. 131). Eight-foot high black vinyl-coated fence will be installed along the endlines where ponds, steep slopes, or other hazards exist.
- **Maintenance of existing multi-purpose rectangular field**, until acceptance by MNCPPC, to include good turf condition, free of weeds, a level surface free of depressions, and suitable for play.
- **One football field**, 232 feet by 372 feet (including a 6' unobstructed space surrounding the field), crowned, sloped at 1.5%, (M-NCPPC Standard No. 121), including combination Football/Soccer Goals in accordance with M-NCPPC Standard No. 143.
- **Proper field spacing** to accommodate future lighting and turf, with fields spaced as far apart as the site will allow.
- **Soil Amendments** as required to meet M-NCPPC standards for athletic field construction and establishing turf vegetation.
- **Asphalt trail** (M-NCPPC Standard No. 313) as required to provide handicap access from the parking lot to the fields.
- **Parking accommodations** (M-NCPPC Standard No. 301) for 227 cars.
- **Pedestrian connection** (M-NCPPC Standard No. 313) to the existing trail on north side of Norbeck Road via a connection to the existing sidewalk on the south-east quadrant of the intersection of Layhill Road and Norbeck Road.
- **Entrance Widening for Vehicular Access** from Norbeck Road to include three twelve feet wide lanes (one entrance lane and two lanes for right-and-left exit) and a five-foot width sidewalk. The right turn lane will extend from Norbeck Road to Bready Farm Court.
- **Concrete Pad with Screen Fencing** to accommodate placement of single handicapped accessible, portable toilets at each end of the park (total of two).
- **Asphalt Overlay of Existing Roadway** to rehabilitate existing base paving and place the final surface course paving on the existing roadway that previously constructed by the developer that will be used for the park.
- **Reorientation of Tee Boxes, 25' Fairway shift, and planting on Adjacent Northwest Branch Park Golf Course** to minimize the potential of golf balls coming into the sports complex (MNCPPC responsibility and not in SHA's Phase 1 work)
- **Removal and restoration of all temporary sediment control measures** from the site, including where these measures exist outside of the proposed development area for Phase I.
- **Abandon existing public utilities no longer needed for planned development**, including removal of structures to 2-feet (based on approval by utility company) below proposed grade to insure that no manholes are located at the surface of playing fields; maintain the water and sewer services to the extent required by M-NCPPC for a future restroom.
- **Storm drain conveyance system** as needed so that no offsite drainage will be directed to playing fields, and accommodate future trail locations.
- **Stormwater management** to current standards and to treat future volumes from turf fields.

- *Erosion and sediment controls, invasive species removal for all limits of disturbance, and reforestation area plantings.*

## Phase II

- *Asphalt trail of 8-foot width* to create a pedestrian circulation system through the park and also provide a recreational opportunity through creation of a “heart-smart” trail.
- *Re-orientation of Interim Rectangular Field* already constructed to provide proper field orientation with respect to sunlight, to improve field grading, and also to create space for proposed playground and restroom/picnic building.
- *Parking* for an additional 39 spaces to accommodate Phase II uses.
- *Playground*, to include 6,000 square feet (sf) for ages 5-12 and 4,000 SF for ages 2-5.
- *Restroom and/or picnic shelter building*, approximately 2,700 sf
- *Potential Maintenance Building and Covered bulk storage bin area*, approximately 1,000 square feet, for equipment needed for park maintenance vehicles and equipment storage.
- *Field Lighting* to allow for nighttime use of facilities.
- *Artificial Turf* to allow higher level playing fields that can be programmed to serve more users.
- *Stormwater Management, sediment control, invasive species removal and reforestation.*

## V. CONCEPT PLAN STUDY

### A. Archeological Resources

Two recorded archeological sites are located on the southern edge of the Llewellyn Fields property, outside the archeological survey area: 18MO425 (Bready Site) and 18MO426 (Dambert Site). Both are quartz lithic scatters lacking formal evaluations of NRHP eligibility. Also, a former cemetery site is located on the Llewellyn Fields Park property about 600 feet outside the archeological survey area. The graves have been removed, and only a retaining wall/footer, a stairway, and a fence remain. The relocation apparently occurred sometime between 1993 and May 2006. A May 2006 visit by the ICC Team identified no gravestones or other cemetery ornamentation. Based on the degree of prior disturbance to the property, including grading, filling, and unimproved road construction, significant archeological resources are unlikely to occur. Therefore, the proposed park improvements will not disturb the archeological resources.

### B. Pedestrian and Vehicular Access

Vehicular access to the park will be provided by the existing roadway entrance on Norbeck Road, directly across from Llewellyn Manor Way. An existing median break and left turn bay on Norbeck Road will provide park access for westbound traffic, and an existing acceleration/deceleration lane will provide park access for eastbound traffic. M-NCPPC's Transportation Planning Division staff prepared an Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of

the proposed project. They find that the proposed park satisfies the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) test and will have no adverse effect on nearby roadway conditions or pedestrian facilities, if the following improvements are included in the project:

1. Widen the site access point from Norbeck Road to add a third lane for separate westbound left-turn and eastbound right turn lanes.
2. Provide a 5-foot-wide lead-in sidewalk with the necessary handicapped ramps from Norbeck Road at the site vehicular access.
3. Work with SHA to revise traffic signal warrant study with pedestrian and vehicular traffic volume data reflecting the future traffic conditions when the recreational park is open. Based on the results of the study, SHA should coordinate with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Norbeck Road at the intersection of the recreational park's access (platted as Llewellyn Manor Way).
4. SHA to provide 5-foot-wide sidewalks or equivalent path along the south side of Norbeck Road into the recreation park from Layhill Road and from Norwood Road.

### **C. Public Meeting**

On June 13, 2007, a public meeting was held at Blake High School to present the concept plan. Approximately 20 citizens attended. M-NCPPC presented the project history and proposed concept plan. The public response was generally supportive. A comprehensive summary of the public comments is attached in the appendix. A brief summary of the main concerns and responses are:

- Public Comment – Request to change park name  
M-NCPPC Response – Staff is recommending that the name be revised from “Llewellyn Fields” to “Athletic Area at Northwest Recreational Park”.
- Public Comment – Residents were concerned about traffic on Norbeck and need for signal at park entrance
- M-NCPPC Response – A study by M-NCPPC Transportation Planning Division, as well as discussions with MCDOT indicated that a signal is not currently warranted based on current roadway traffic and projected park use, but the issue can be re-assessed after the park opening. An analysis by the ICC Environmental Management Team also found that the project will not adversely impact traffic to the Llewellyn fields subdivision on the north side of MD 28.
- Public Comment – Residents requested lighted tennis and basketball courts
- M-NCPPC Response – There are lighted tennis courts available at East Norbeck Local Park and Olney Manor Recreational Park. PP&SD currently do not project the need for additional lighted tennis or basketball courts in this vicinity.

### **D. Agency Reviews and Approvals**

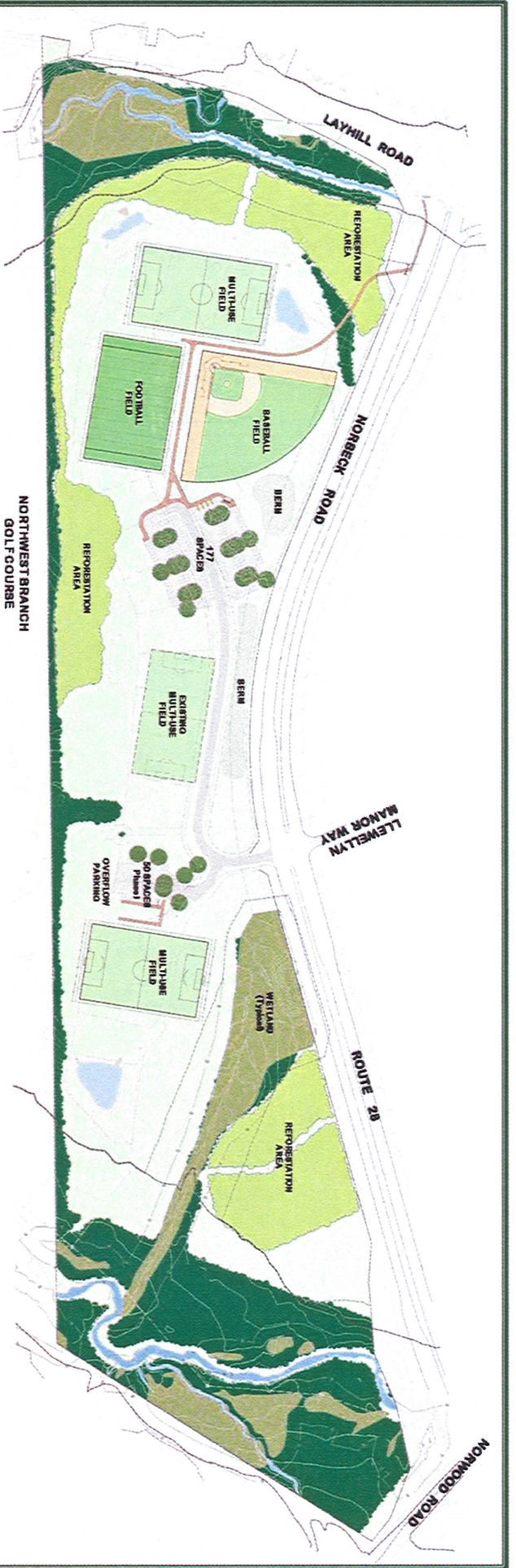
Reviews by regulatory agencies and the staff team occurred at several junctures during the development of the concept plan.

- ***M-NCPPC Environmental Planning*** – A Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) was prepared by SHA and approved by M-NCPPC on August 10, 2007. A copy of the plan and approval letter is included in the attachments. The presence of a conservation easement to the developer’s preliminary plan was identified, and SHA is currently in the process of developing a request to the planning board to remove this easement (established for a previously existing wetland that was eliminated when Norbeck Road was constructed).
- ***M-NCPPC PDCO Team*** – A team of representatives from Park Police, Northern Region, Central Maintenance, Park, Planning & Stewardship Division, Horticulture and Arboriculture Division, Environmental Planning Division, and Transportation Planning Division as well as Park Development Division Staff reviewed the project and conducted two review meetings. The final concept plan has been revised to address staff comments.
- ***Montgomery County Revenue Authority*** – M-NCPPC staff contacted the Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA) because of concerns about the proximity of the park to the golf course raised during the PDCO team meetings. In response to MCRA’s concerns, M-NCPPC procured a study of the safety issue by a golf course architect, Brian Ault. A copy of his report is included in the appendix. Staff has committed to performing coordination with MCRA and funding minor adjustments to the green, as recommended in Mr. Ault’s report. Staff has met with MCRA, and these improvements are estimated to cost less than \$5,000.

During the project design, SHA will obtain all necessary Federal and State permits and approvals, including but not limited to the following: MDE for sediment and stormwater review, DNR for forest conservation review, and MCDOT for any work required in the MD 28 right of way. The design, permitting and construction will be performed in accordance with the *MD 200 – Intercounty Connector: Environmental Mitigation & Stewardship Program Master Memorandum of Understanding*, dated October 21, 2009. The Department of Parks will maintain a Project Manager to oversee development and Staff review of detailed design plans and specifications, and coordinate plan approval prior to start of construction. During construction, the Department of Parks will assign a Construction Inspector to monitor and document construction for facility acceptance by M-NCPPC for operations. The new park falls within the Olney Manor Management Area of the Northern Region.

## **VI. RECOMMENDED CONCEPT PLAN**

The recommended concept plan is shown in the two renderings on the following pages. There is a separate plan for Phase I (to be constructed by SHA) and a plan for Phases I and II combined.



Athletic Fields AT  
**NORTHWEST BRANCH RECREATIONAL PARK**  
 Concept Plan – Phase I



Athletic Fields at  
**NORTHWEST BRANCH RECREATIONAL PARK**  
CONCEPT PLAN – PHASES I AND II

## **VII. COST ESTIMATE AND SCHEDULE**

SHA has indicated that they have available funding of \$2.96 million for Phase I. This figure includes both design and construction funds. Since the project is required by the ICC ROD, SHA is responsible for constructing the facilities in a manner acceptable to M-NCPPC. SHA is responsible for providing the funding necessary to design and construct the facilities shown in Phase I to create a fully functional facility to M-NCPPC standards; if the current estimated cost is not adequate, SHA is responsible for any required increase. The facilities are anticipated to be completed and available for use by November 2012, which includes time for turf establishment prior to permitted play on fields.

M-NCPPC has not calculated a cost for Phase II facilities at this time, and there is currently no planned implementation schedule for Phase II.

## **VIII. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

A. Pursuant to County Council rules, a CIP Project Description Form (PDF) must be submitted for Council approval for a project constructed on parkland, based on peak-hour vehicle trips (> 25), or operating budget (> 10% of capital cost). Although SHA currently owns over half the land, staff recommends the Board submit a PDF for this project for the following reasons:

- SHA intends to convey its portion of the site to M-NCPPC
- The capital cost of the project exceeds \$100,000 (requiring Council notification)
- Peak-hour trips are projected to exceed 25
- OBI is more than 10% in the first year of operations

A PDF will be submitted for Board approval for transmittal to the Executive and County Council in the future.

### **B. Operating Budget Impact (OBI)**

The M-NCPPC staff prepared an estimate of annual operating budget costs that would become effective in order to maintain the new park. The estimate includes activities that will be accomplished by staff from the Northern Region (Olney Manor), Natural Resources, Central Maintenance, and Park Police. The estimate addresses costs for labor and time; additional staff work years, equipment and materials, and any contract work. The total initial cost for start up and first year operations is \$371,698 and the future estimated annual operating budget for this park averages approximately \$193,000. A detailed OBI estimate is included in the attachments. These costs are for the Phase I facilities to be constructed by SHA, and do not include costs for the lighting, playground, etc., to be constructed by M-NCPPC during the second phase.