



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

MCPB
Item # **15**
9/16/2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: Mark Pfefferle, Acting Chief, Environmental Planning *MP*
FROM: Marco Fuster, Senior Planner, Environmental Planning *MF*
REVIEW TYPE: Limited Amendment to Forest Conservation Plan
PLAN NAME: Long Branch Walkway-Bridge and Sidewalk
PLAN NUMBER: MR2007901
REVIEW BASIS: Chapter 22A - Forest Conservation Law
LOCATION: Long Branch Stream Valley Park, Silver Spring
APPLICANT: Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)
ENGINEER: JMT and Zimar & Associates, Inc.
DATE: September 3, 2010

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of plan amendment with the removal of the following condition:

- Tighten grading closer to path and move tree protection fencing about 5' – 10' closer to new path in order to save 28" Tulip Poplar and improve conditions for 48" Tulip Poplar on the north side of the trail.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located within Long Branch Stream Valley Park near the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street in Silver Spring. The project is a trail and bridge that improves the connections between the Long Branch Library and the Long Branch Community center and pool complex. The existing trail between the facilities is connected by a low bridge and earthen embankment. Long Branch Creek meanders through the completely forested valley. Numerous significant and specimen trees are located within the Park boundaries and adjacent areas. The stream is a tributary to Sligo Creek and is classified as Use I waters. The site contains areas of steep slopes, including sections over 25%; although no erodible soils occur near the project boundary. There are no

wetlands or associated wetland buffers within the subject area; however the significant portions of the project occur within the stream buffer. The site is not within a Special Protection Area or Primary Management Area.



Vicinity map (2008 image)

Note: library is on County land, Community center, pool and surrounding parks and natural areas are on M-NCPPC land.

BACKGROUND

On May 31, 2007, the Planning Board approved a preliminary forest conservation plan, mandatory referral, and facility plan for the construction of an ADA accessible pedestrian bridge and walkway providing an improved east-west access between the commercial corridor, public facilities and the nearby residential neighborhood. The applicant, the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) submitted the plans to the Planning Board after an extensive planning/alignment study and when the project was 30 % through the design phase.

The property is subject to the Chapter 22A of County code and the Planning Board approved a preliminary forest conservation plan that showed 0.28 acres of forest clearing. The current proposal shows 0.29 acres of forest clearing and has no forest planting requirements. There is no planting required for forest conservation purposes; however plantings will occur to restore the forest areas adjacent to the new trail and bridge.

The Planning Board approved the forest conservation plan with the following conditions. These include:

- Submit a Tree Save Plan prepared and signed by a certified arborist or a licensed forester showing the following items:
 - ❑ Specifications about asphalt removal and soil reconditioning where the existing path will be removed.
 - ❑ Tree protection fence shown in detail and in plan on edges of forest where cut is occurring.
 - ❑ Tighten grading closer to path and move tree protection fencing about 5' – 10' closer to new path in order to save 28" Tulip Poplar and improve conditions for 48" Tulip Poplar on the north side of the trail.
 - ❑ Save the 28" Tulip Poplar on the south side of the trail by realigning the walkway leading to the apartments.
 - ❑ Remove root pruning in areas of fill.
 - ❑ Include forest impact notes and tree care notes for pre and post construction activities.
- Approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan must be coordinated with Forest Conservation Plan.
- Reduce reforestation area shown on Landscape Plan to preserve open view through floodplain for security.

The applicant still has not received final forest conservation plan approval for a number of design changes and new information has made it difficult for the applicant to comply with the Planning Board's conditions. As a result the project remains un-built. The applicant is requesting a change to the condition that requires the applicant to tighten the grading and move the fencing 5 to 10 feet to the new path in order to construct the bridge. Staff believes the condition should be eliminated because design changes and new information has made it impossible to comply with the condition. The applicant is also providing additional tree protection not previously shown on the preliminary forest conservation plan to protect the 48" tulip poplar tree and 28" white oak.

Design Changes

After 50% design development stage, drawings of the adjacent community center indicated a sewer man-hole in the vicinity of the proposed bridge and trail. The applicant and applicant's engineer could not detect any man holes in the area. The applicant made a special request to WSSC to field locate the man-hole in question but WSSC did not have accurate drawings of the nearly 50-year old system. WSSC did eventually find a number of the man-holes that were completely covered and marked the man-holes with vertical white markers. The newly identified features were then plotted by the applicant's engineer and included on the bridge-trail plans. One of the man-holes is located

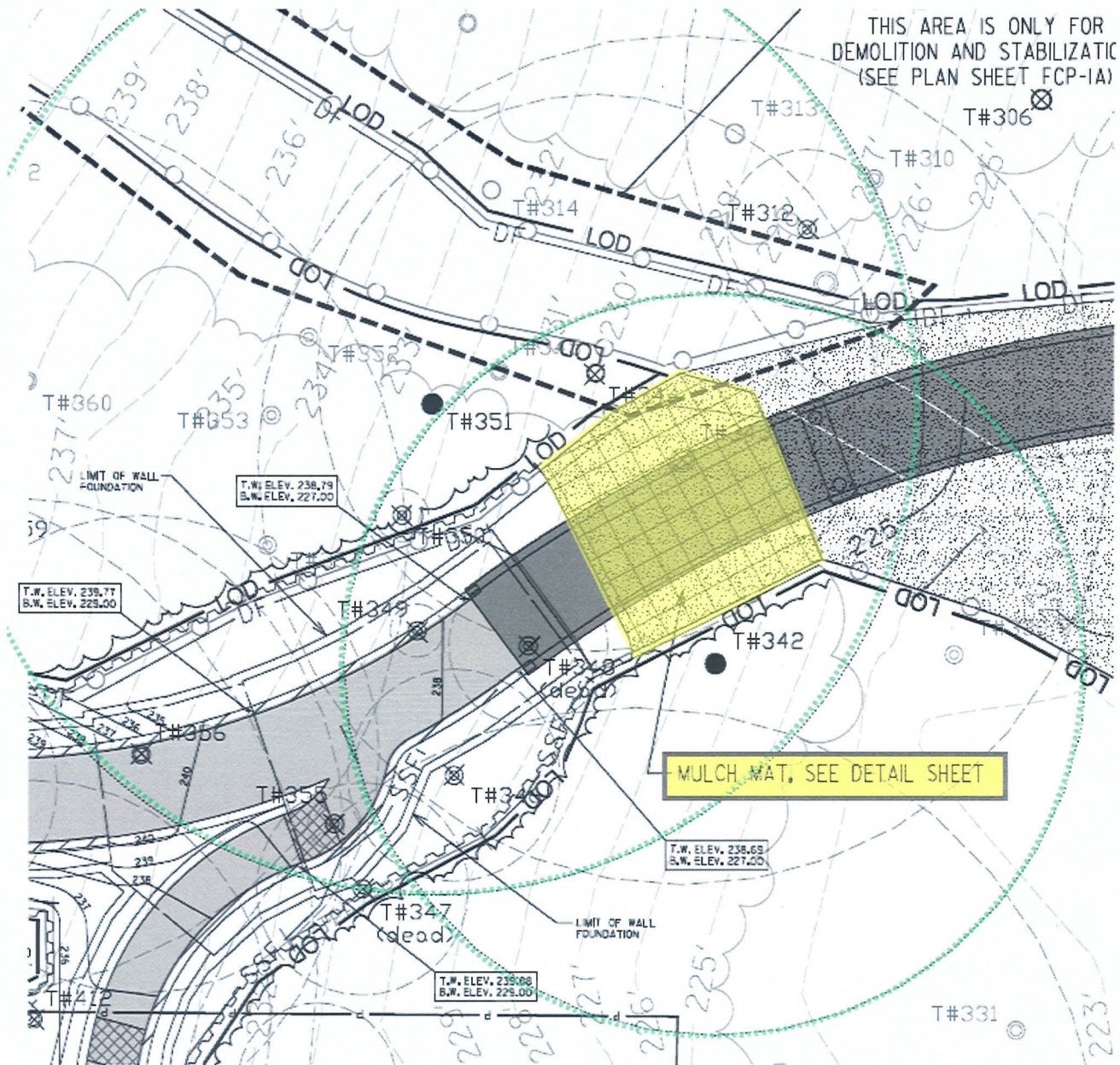
adjacent to the south edge of bridge footprint. WSSC requested a 5-foot horizontal clearance from the bridge to the man-hole. Therefore the bridge alignment was shifted 5-6 feet north to clear the man-hole per WSSC requirements. A sketch showing the realigned bridge was forwarded to M-NCPPC staff and conceptually approved.

Second, the Mandatory Referral and Facility Plan approval specified that the trail and bridge shall be built to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Specifically, the standards as described in the "Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, Final Report" dated September 19, 1999. Subsequent to the MNCPPC approval an additional source of revenue (\$742,500) was secured to fund the project. The additional revenue source is Federal Transportation funds managed by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA). All projects either constructed or funded by SHA require adherence to statutory regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The statutory regulations require a gradient of 5% or less, throughout the project. This necessitated a redesign of the project resulting in raising the western abutment and retaining walls by 3 feet, utilizing massive foundations and extensive sheeting and shoring (to keep to LOD contained within a relatively narrow corridor).

Status of Planning Board Conditions

Given the design changes needed to meet WSSC and SHA concerns the applicant could not devise a plan that would also meet the original Planning Board conditions (although DHCA, their consultants, Parks Staff and Environmental Planning Staff had coordinated extensively in attempts to work within the constrains). The applicant has, or can, comply with all conditions except for the condition to *"Tighten grading closer to path and move tree protection fencing about 5' – 10' closer to new path in order to save 28" Tulip Poplar and improve conditions for 48" Tulip Poplar on the north side of the trail"*. (The plan originally submitted to the Planning Board showed the LOD as measuring 11' from the center of the 48"tree, therefore the condition required the LOD to be reset at about 16'- 21' away from the tree. In order to construct the bridge the applicant is requesting removal of Planning Board condition stated above. Furthermore, 28"tulip trees referenced in the Planning Board conditions were later found to have health/safety issues and should therefore not be retained given their location in close proximity the construction area and new facilities. An amendment to the conditions referencing 28" tulip trees is also requested.

The current plan submission (August 27, 2010) proposes a heavy duty "root friendly" mulch mat application which will protect portions of the Critical Root Zone (CRZ) of tree #351 (and other trees). The matting will allow construction access while also incorporating tree protection and sediment control fencing without trenching or other disturbance to the ground (refer to image below).



ENHANCED PLAN VIEW TREES #351 AND #342
Current plan proposal.

FOREST CONSERVATION AND TREE SAVE

Although the measures do not precisely meet the original Planning Board conditions, staff believes the current proposal provides a reasonable compromise in light of the new constraints. As stated in the August 25, 2010 letter by the consulting arborist for the project (refer to attachment 1 below), the tree of particular concern (#351) has a high probability of success, and that the current plan configuration relative to this tree is improved over the plan which was originally presented to the Board.

NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNITY COMMENT

All adjoining and confronting property owners and interested parties were notified of the public hearing on the proposed amendment in accordance with Planning Board policy. Any comments received will be forwarded to the Board. Residents who had either provided testimony at May 31, 2007 hearing date or who previously expressed concerns to Planning Department staff are also included in the notification. (During the May 31, 2007 hearing a representative of the Long Branch Citizen's Advisory Board had spoken in favor of the project).

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends the Planning Board approve the amendment to the forest conservation plan and the deletion of the condition:

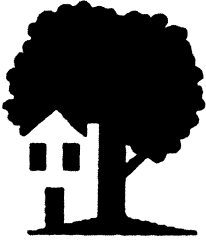
- o Tighten grading closer to path and move tree protection fencing about 5' – 10' closer to new path in order to save 28" Tulip Poplar and improve conditions for 48" Tulip Poplar on the north side of the trail.

All other conditions are to remain.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Arborist report regarding tree #351

Attachment B – Original Staff Report



Zimar & Associates, Inc.

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Suite 207
Manassas, VA 20110
703.331.3731 Fax: 703.331.1359*

August 25, 2010

Wajeda J. Rab
Senior Planning Specialist
DHCA
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Tree #351 – Tree subject of Plan Amendment

Dear Ms. Rab:

As a result of the required engineering changes due to changing the height of the bridge and to accommodate other constraints imposed by the sanitary sewer, it has become impossible to meet the requirement of additional distance between tree #351 and the limits of disturbance. These constraints require the addition of sheeting and shoring along the original proposed limit of disturbance in order to protect the original corridor while allowing space for the construction of the bridge in a safe manner. The remainder of the team can likely better describe these constraints. Following is my assessment of how this will affect tulip poplar number 351:

1. The sheeting and shoring will penetrate the root zone to within eleven feet at one point of the perimeter of this tree. It can be done in a manner that does not damage major buttress roots thereby allowing the tree to remain structurally stable.
2. We have completely redesigned the erosion and sediment control devices and tree protection devices in this area to allow for the preservation of roots beneath the adjacent span without major disturbance. This has been accomplished by:
 - a. Eliminating root pruning in this section of the plan along the LOD on both sides of the bridge.
 - b. Eliminating the need to trench for the installation of super silt fence by obtaining agreement with DPS for approval of a sock type erosion and sediment control device that does not require trenching.
 - c. Use of a modified mulch mat and industrial lagging board detail that was also approved by DPS that will protect the roots beneath this area from disturbance.

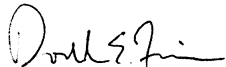
I generally believe these modifications amount to an overall improvement over the original requirement to move the LOD five to eight feet further from the tree. The efforts we have put into the design actually preserve more of the root zone long term than the original

requirement. However, it does not technically meet the requirement to move the limit, and therefore a plan amendment is necessary.

Approval of an amendment for the plan as currently designed and submitted therefore meets the intent of trying to maximize the potential for preservation of this tree while accommodating the engineering constraints that also had to be addressed. In my opinion, this represents the best option and is the result of intensive cooperation between the various review agencies involved and the design team.

It should be noted that preservation of a living tree can never be 100% guaranteed. However given my experience with this type of effort in similar circumstances, I am confident a high probability of success can be anticipated.

Respectfully,



2010.08.25 18:07:34 -04'00'

Donald E. Zimar
RCA #446



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

MCPB
Item #
5/31/07

May 19, 2007

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
Mary Bradford, Director of Parks

VIA: John Hench, Acting Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division
Mike Riley, Chief, Park Development Division
George Valladares, Chief, Environmental Planning Division

FROM: Tanya Schmieler Park Planning and Stewardship Division
Brenda Iraola Park Development Division
Marion Clark, Environmental Planning Division

**SUBJECT: Long Branch- Walkway-Bridge
Mandatory Referral No. 07901-DH&CA-1**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION No 1: Approval of the Forest Conservation Plan, with conditions on page 6.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION No 2 Approval of Mandatory Referral No 07901-DH&CA-1, with conditions on page 7, and

STAFF RECOMMENDATION No 3: Approval of the Facility Plan for the Long Branch Walkway-Bridge project with conditions on Page 7 (document is combined with Mandatory Referral).

Summary

The Long Branch Walkway – Bridge and Library Sidewalk project is the first stage of a proposed series of linkages in the Long Branch community that will connect the high-density residential areas with the Village Center and other key activity/service centers through signage and enhanced streetscaping. Once completed, the walkway and bridge will serve as the centerpiece of a safe walkway system in Long Branch, connecting ball-fields, playgrounds, single-family and multi-family housing with the Long Branch Community Center, Library and Pool Complex. The trail will also make it possible for residents to walk to the commercial core of the community.

The primary objective of this project is to provide a safe ADA compliant pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Long Branch Community Center, the Long Branch Library, and the communities on both sides of the Long Branch Stream Valley. The current path and bridge

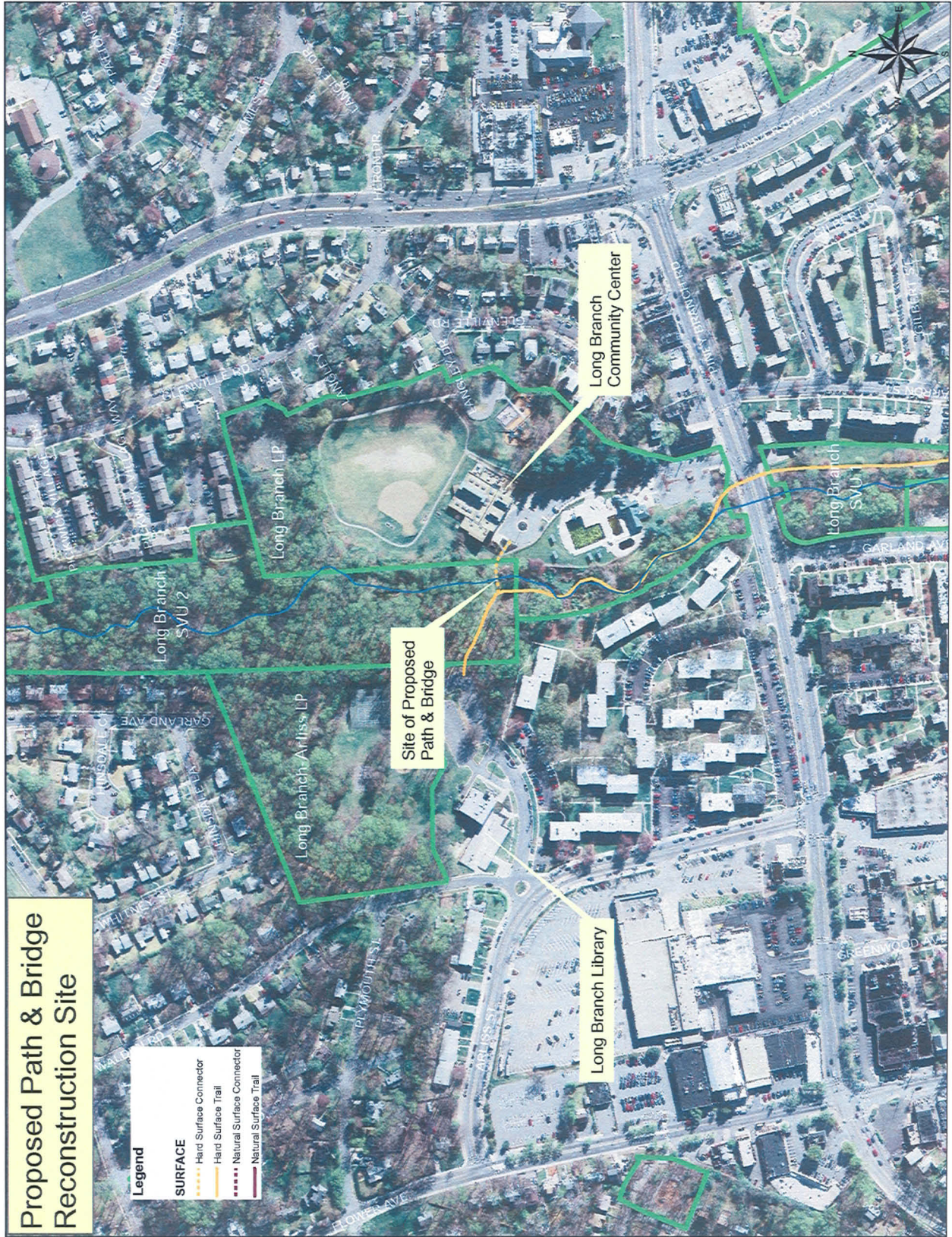
will be improved and re-aligned for safety and convenient access and portions will be elevated to provide accessibility to persons with disabilities. The trail/elevated walkway will blend with the natural woodland setting and is being designed to minimize environmental impacts. The trail and bridge construction will be funded by The Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) with subsequent maintenance by the M-NCPPC Parks Department.

For this project, DHCA has submitted a Forest Conservation Plan and a combination Mandatory Referral and Facility Plan, the later of which is required because the proposal is on Parkland. Staff recognizes the importance of this project and recommends approval of the Long Branch Trail and Bridge project with the conditions stated in this Memorandum. It is noted that minor modifications approved by M-NCPPC and DHCA may be needed during the final design stage of this project and prior to park permit.

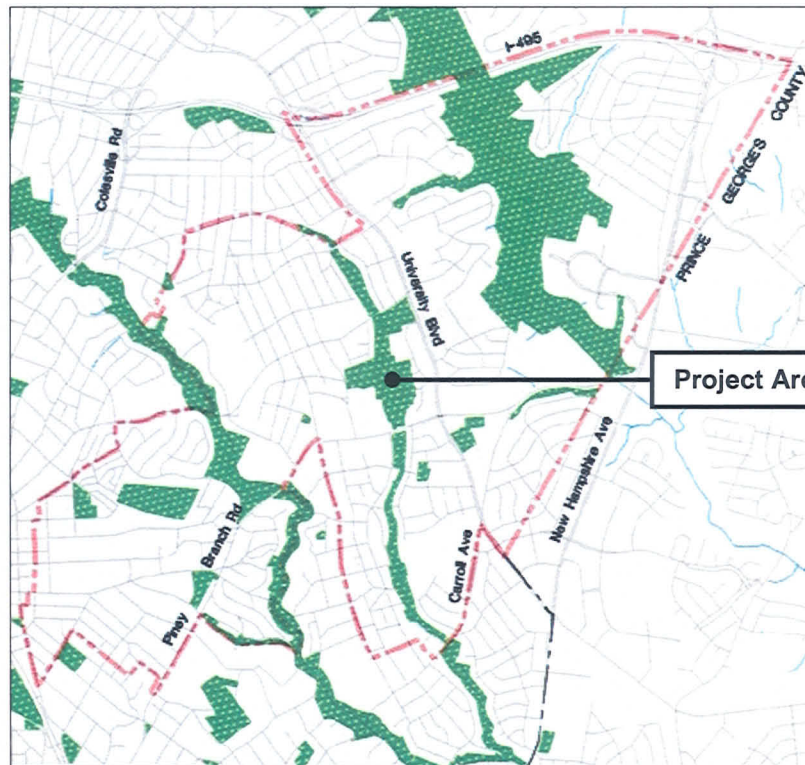
For this project, multiple designs were considered. Based on community input, the Parks Department and other government stakeholders, two final trail design alternatives were developed. After further coordination with M-NCPPC Staff and the public, DHCA recommended Alternative 2 as the preferred alignment, and it is the subject of this mandatory referral and facility plan. The trail is proposed to consist of an 8-foot-wide asphalt trail to be shared by pedestrians and bicyclists, with 2-foot-wide grass shoulders on either side of the trail for security. It would include an aesthetic curved 10 ft wide bridge component or elevated walkway to span the entire floodplain of the Long Branch stream. This recommended alignment brings the trail closer to the adjacent apartments to facilitate use by residents, and achieve the ADA guidelines as stipulated for the project. Alternative 2 locates the bridge in approximately the same area as the existing bridge and has a slightly lower total disturbed area. It is being recommended by DHCA for approval because the Department is committed to creating a signature project for the Long Branch community. This alternative provides a more interesting and attractive experience for the user of the trail through the stream valley parkland, without sacrificing safety and maintenance issues. The final design of this project will consider modifications to assure that any trail disruption will be minimized as much as possible during construction. The walkway and bridge will be designed to be easily accessible for maintenance, graffiti resistant and minimally affected by vandalism. Green building techniques will be used wherever possible and affordable.

Public input was provided throughout the project. The walkway-bridge concept originated with the community, specifically the Long Branch Task force. The two concepts were presented to the general public in October 2006. Notices of the Planning Board Item were sent in English and Spanish to Area citizens associations, public facilities, apartments and the Long Branch Task force.

The DHCA mandatory referral submission may be viewed in the Park Planning and Stewardship Office, Room 800, 1109 Spring Street in Silver Spring, MD.



Vicinity Map



- East Silver Spring Master Plan Boundary
- █ Parks
- - - County Line



The existing Long Branch Bridge.



Trail and Bridge concept drawing.

Recommended Conditions for Approval for the Forest Conservation Plan, Mandatory Referral and the Facility Plan

Forest Conservation Plan

The Forest Conservation Plan is an essential part of any mandatory referral and facility plan and must be submitted prior to official review of the project. The formal response to the Forest Conservation Plan is included in Attachment 1.

Conditions for Approval

Environmental Planning staff recommends **approval** of this Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan with the following conditions:

- Submit a Tree Save Plan prepared and signed by a certified arborist or a licensed forester showing the following items:
 - ❑ Specifications about asphalt removal and soil reconditioning where the existing path will be removed.
 - ❑ Tree protection fence shown in detail and in plan on edges of forest where cut is occurring.
 - ❑ Tighten grading closer to path and move tree protection fencing about 5' – 10' closer to new path in order to save 28" Tulip Poplar and improve conditions for 48" Tulip Poplar on the north side of the trail.
 - ❑ Save the 28" Tulip Poplar on the south side of the trail by realigning the walkway leading to the apartments.
 - ❑ Remove root pruning in areas of fill.
 - ❑ Include forest impact notes and tree care notes for pre and post construction activities.
- Approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan must be coordinated with Forest Conservation Plan.
- Reduce reforestation area shown on Landscape Plan to preserve open view through floodplain for security.

Discussion

The proposal for a replacement trail bridge over the Long Branch tributary is an exercise in balancing human needs with preserving natural resources. Since the existing trail does not meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, the new trail and bridge couldn't be constructed in the alignment. The new bridge spans the floodplain at a higher elevation, requiring a new trail alignment, additional cutting and filling, and forest removal through the stream valley and floodplain.

Although the conditions listed above are for a wood bridge structure and paved trail, detailed in the submitted drawings, these drawings will change to reflect a steel bridge most recently agreed upon by the Department of Parks and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. This change will result in a slightly different trail alignment, which has not yet been worked out or submitted. If the new plan results in a major amendment to the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan, which is any forest clearing over 5000 square feet, either because of

construction activities or trail alignment, the new Forest Conservation and Tree Save Plan must return to the Planning Board to be approved.

Mandatory Referral

Staff finds that the proposed project is consistent with the area master plan, current zoning and land use and circulation systems, and that it is generally consistent with environmental guidelines and requirements.

Community-Based Planning staff recommends approval of this plan. The Community-Based planning staff reviewed Alternative 2 for compliance with the December 2000, East Silver Spring Master Plan, which acknowledges the need for improved pedestrian access within and surrounding the Long Branch and Flower Village Center neighborhoods on Piney Branch Avenue. The master plan specifically recommends providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access, particularly on countywide trails to improve overall connectivity within the existing park-trail system.

The Long Branch Task Force and ULI Technical Assistance Panel study in 2005, also support the proposed project recommendations as a major priority in improving and revitalizing the Long Branch community. The study acknowledges that the proposed pedestrian connection is highly supported by the community and encouraged to move forward.

Conditions for Approval

Staff recommends approval of the mandatory referral subject to a condition that a park permit be obtained prior to any clearing, grading or construction on parkland.

The current Plans are approved at the 30% design stage. More detailed plans will be approved prior to the issuance of a park permit, and adjustments made where needed.

Facility Plan

The Park Development Division recommends approval of the Facility Plan with the following conditions that have been coordinated with staff representing various professional areas and DHCA:

Conditions for Approval

1. Technical Review and Park Permit – The Department of Housing and Community Affairs will need to prepare detailed design and construction documents with technical specifications that comply with the M-NCPPC, Park Development Division, technical specifications and standards for design and construction as well as comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act for accessibility. Plans shall be submitted for technical review at 50% design, at the same time plans are submitted for other agency approvals. The applicant shall address all comments raised at the Detailed Design Phase prior to completion of 100% documents and issuance of the Park Permit. The applicant shall be required to provide construction oversight and material testing associated with the project. Certified As-Built drawings shall be submitted to M-NCPPC

confirming that construction meets the M-NCPPC approved plans and specifications. The plans must meet all local, state or federal codes, as applicable. The Landscape Plan, Reforestation Plan and Lighting Plan are submitted for the Mandatory Referral as 30% plans and are to be revised to include additional information to meet park permit requirements. At the Detailed Design Phase, the applicant shall submit for review the 50% Landscape Plan, Reforestation Plan and the Lighting Plan. These plans shall be revised per the requests of the MNCPPC staff prior to submittal for the approval for park permit.

2. Trail – The trail shall be a minimum of 8 feet wide (2% maximum cross slope) with 2-foot grass shoulders (maximum 4% cross slope) on both sides unless otherwise specified by M-NCPPC staff. The trail shall be sited to minimize environmental impacts. A profile of the bridge and trail alignment, showing existing and proposed grades, shall be submitted for review and approval by M-NCPPC staff. All trees, along the bridge and trail alignment, shall be limbed up to a minimum 12-foot height to provide for free travel of both police cruisers and maintenance trucks. The trail and bridge shall be built to meet American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. A striped crosswalk and curb ramp shall be provided at the trail entrances to meet the Department of Public Works and Transportation standards to connect the trail to the Long Branch Library and Community Center sidewalk. Prior to Park Permit, a Trail / Signage Plan shall be reviewed and approved by the M-NCPPC staff. Signage shall be provided as required by M-NCPPC standards, which prohibits unauthorized motor vehicles.

3. Bridge - The bridge shall be designed to be aesthetically pleasing with minimal impact to the natural resources in the park, provide connectivity, and promote safety. Since the bridge will be owned and maintained by the M-NCPPC, the bridge design shall be low maintenance and provide an average life cycle of 50 years.

Prior to Park Permit, the MNCPPC recommends that the DHCA consult with the Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T) Transportation Design Section for the bridge design, structural plans, and construction management requirements of the project. The Bridge Structure Plan shall be designed and sealed by a Registered Professional Structural Engineer licensed in Maryland and shall bear his/her stamp and signature on all plans and specifications. The plans shall include design of the abutments, as well as the approaches to the bridge and shall provide technical information for removal and replacement of the bridge and trail with minimal impact on the existing natural resources. The Bridge Structure Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC Construction Section for bridge material type and location. The bridge shall be designed as a minimum 10-foot clear width and shall provide a 10,000 lb. live load. Railings shall be a minimum 42-inch height. The bridge material shall be a material that is graffiti resistant and allows for easy cleaning.

The 170-foot (approximate) length bridge shall be constructed as a steel stringer bridge, with steel or concrete piers, concrete abutments, and a maximum of two to four spans, unless otherwise approved by the MNCPPC. The steel stringers shall be made of weathering steel and shall be constructed from high-strength, self-weathering, low alloy, atmospheric corrosion resistant steel. The pier locations shall be adjusted accordingly to provide maximum clearance of stream banks. Pedestrian access shall be maintained as much as possible during construction, or alternative routes shall be designated. The floodplain fill soil, presently existing near the park bridge abutments, shall be removed and the existing floodplain shall be restored to its natural grade.

4. Lighting – Prior to Park Permit, a Photometric Plan and Lighting Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC. The lighting provided shall maintain the current lighting along the existing trail and bridge for security purposes and facial recognition. Protective coverings shall be provided over the lights to prevent vandalism. The light fixtures shall be no more than 20-feet in height using metal halide lighting with a full cut-off light fixture and a housing shield to reduce sky glow and glare onto the adjacent residential apartments; lighting shall also be vandal resistant. Lighting shall also be integrated into the bridge railing system where possible.

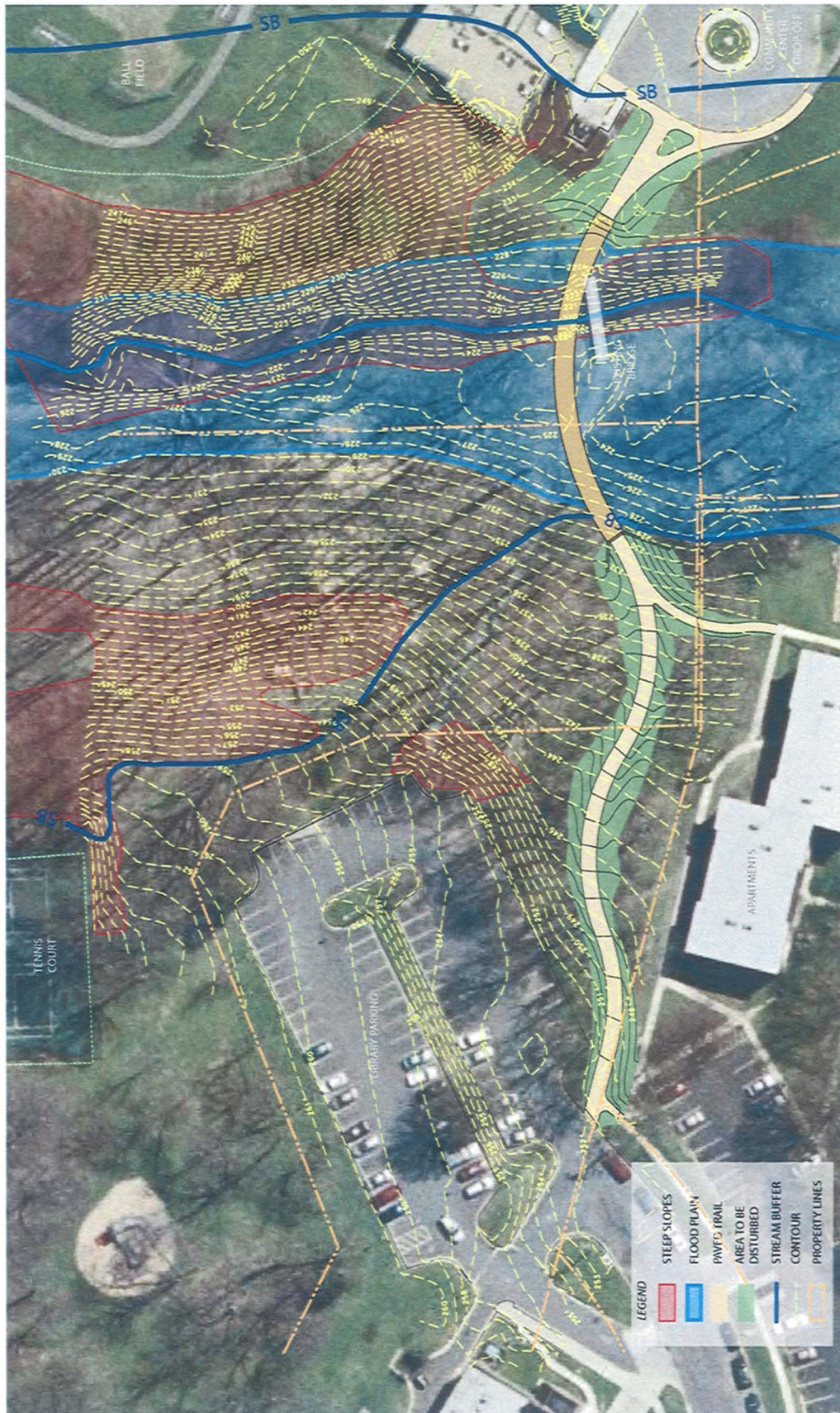
5. Landscaping and Reforestation - Prior to Park Permit, a Landscape and Reforestation Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC. The plan shall comply with applicable M-NCPPC technical specifications, including deer protection measures and removal or eradication of invasive species. The Landscape Plan shall coordinate with the Planting Design Concept (narrative) and provide accurate plant species names per M-NCPPC standards for landscape plant material that is native/ornamental, disease resistant, deer resistant, and is not on the exotic and invasive species list. The plan shall provide information pertaining to eradication of plant types and the techniques/methods shall be specified. All trees shall be minimum 2-2.5 inch caliper for all plantings at Long Branch. The MNCPPC staff shall provide to DHCA a tree list of species that are appropriate for landscape purposes as well as upland reforestation/lowland reforestation prior to submittal for review and approval of plans. A maintenance contract shall be required for watering the plant material at Long Branch for at least one growing season.

6. Tree Preservation - Prior to Park Permit, plans shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC for tree preservation methods including low-impact construction/equipment and protection measures specified for protection of natural resources during construction. All plans shall comply with the M-NCPPC technical specifications and details. All root pruning will be performed with a Vermeer RT 200 root pruner or approved equal and directed in the field prior to any demolition of existing structures and prior to any construction.

7. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design - Prior to Park Permit the M-NCPPC Park Police shall review and approve plans for compliance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

8. Development Agreement – Prior to Park Permit, a development agreement shall be executed which outlines construction and maintenance responsibilities of Montgomery County DHCA and the M-NCPPC for this project.

9. Stormwater Management – Trail pavement shall not be porous in parks due to the high maintenance requirements. Prior to park permit, a Stormwater Management Plan shall be approved by the Department of Permitting Services.



Proposed Alignment.

ALTERNATIVE 2
LONG BRANCH WALKWAY - STREAM VALLEY PARK
 Silver Spring, Montgomery County, MD

October, 2006



Project Description - Long Branch Walkway Bridge

Statement of Purpose and Need

The impetus for the Long Branch Walkway - Bridge and Library Sidewalk project was a priority recommendation of the Long Branch Task Force. The Task Force recognized a need for improved, safe, linkages between major community resources, residential areas and the commercial area. The Task Force requested that DHCA conduct a pedestrian accessibility study of the Long Branch Commercial Core/Village Center. A subsequently developed Urban Design Concept identified the connection between the Community Center and the Library as a critical link. The recommendations of the Urban Design Concept were considered by the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel. They issued a report titled "The Long Branch Community" dated February 2005. The study was conducted at the request of DHCA in response to another recommendation of the Long Branch Task Force. The final report of the Long Branch Task Force listed the walkway -bridge as a priority.

The Walkway - Bridge is the centerpiece of the pedestrian and bicycle circulation system. The Long Branch Walkway-Bridge will provide a safe, accessible pedestrian connection for residents to purchase groceries and children to walk to school or use the library, pool and community center. It will make it easier for the elderly, the disabled and for other users with special need, such as, mothers pushing strollers. In addition, the Long Branch Walkway - Bridge will serve as a safe passage for citizens accessing the Community Center which is a designated emergency shelter.

Site Ownership and Existing Land Uses

The primary landowner throughout the Long Branch Stream Valley is the M-NCPPC. The Commission owns the parcels of the parkland and the ball-fields to the east. The Long Branch Community Center and the Long Branch Pool are located in the Long Branch Local Park owned by the M-NCPPC. The community center building and the structures in the swimming pool complex are owned and operated by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. The grounds associated with these buildings are maintained by the Department of Recreation. The balance of the parkland is maintained by M-NCPPC.

M-NCPPC also owns and maintains the Long Branch – Arliss Park to the west. Also on the west side is the Long Branch Library, owned and operated by the Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries. (Roughly 1/3 of the proposed trail will go through the library property). To the immediate south side of the proposed trail are garden apartments owned by the Flower Branch Ltd. Partnership. A significant number of the apartment dwellers use the existing bridge crossing to go to the community center, the ballfields and the pool complex. To facilitate this traffic pattern, a 6 feet wide trail connection is being proposed to connect the apartments to the new trail in Phase I development. The connection to the ballfields is being proposed at Phase II. A widening of the sidewalk connection to the Long Branch Pool is also proposed in Phase II.

Use of Existing Trail

The need for improved connectivity was further reinforced by a Pedestrian Count study. The study was conducted on Thursday, August 31, 2006 between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Over three hundred people used the existing trail. Of these, 24% were school children, 70-71% other pedestrians and 4-5% bicyclists. Another count was taken between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 23, 2006. Over 230 people used the trail during this time period. Of these about 13% were school children, 83% other pedestrians and 4% bicyclist.

Currently, users of the trail must walk through the parking lot drive lane to get to the beginning of the trail. The trail slopes down steeply from the parking lot at a gradient of approximately 15% which makes the trail inaccessible or difficult to use for people with disabilities, the elderly, and other users with special needs. Coming from the east, trail users must climb up the steep incline and walk through the parking lot to go to the library or the Long Branch – Arliss Park, including the elderly, mothers with strollers and the disabled. In addition, the pavement surface is rough, broken into pieces, or otherwise damaged at various points. The existing pedestrian bridge is narrow and does not meet all American with Disabilities Act (ADA) or American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards. One branch of the trail on the east end connects to a sidewalk that leads to the Long Branch Pool, while the other branch leads to the Long Branch Community Center.

Demographics

The Long Branch area is one of the oldest, most densely populated and most diverse areas of Montgomery County. It has a significant percentage of low-income residents, older housing stock, and changing population. East Silver Spring is and will continue to be the most ethnically diverse area of Montgomery County and will continue to attract immigrants. Many of the residents do not own cars and do not drive and the area has had a number of pedestrian injuries. The Long Branch Task Force has assessed improvements in the area of pedestrian safety as a critical part of the overall action plan to upgrade the quality of life in the Long Branch Area.

The Long Branch Stream Valley forms a barrier between the neighborhoods on either side of it. In the vicinity of the project there is a major commercial area centered on the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue to the west of the creek. There is another smaller commercial area to the east at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and University Boulevard. On both sides along the Stream Valley there are residential neighborhoods. Piney Branch Road is the primary transportation connection across Long Branch stream in the vicinity.

Community Involvement

Community consultation was an integral part of the plan development from the deliberations and recommendations of the Long Branch Task Force, the Silver Spring Neighborhoods Committee, the Silver Spring Advisory Board and to the current involvement of the Long Branch Advisory Committee. In addition, community groups such as the Friends of Sligo Creek were consulted early in the process for their input and opinion. Comments that were received focused on safety, lighting, bridge length, environment, longevity and cost. Their input, recommendations and observations were considered and incorporated in the further refinement during the preparation of the facility plan report. The DHCA/consultant team met with the M-NCPPC, the Wetland Committee and various other groups and County Agencies. The two Alternatives emerged as the preferred ones.

Specific Issues Related to Trail Design

Selection of Preferred Alternative

Alternative 2 was chosen because of significant Technical and Design Benefits

Technical Benefits to Selection of Preferred Alternative 2

- Impacts in the floodplain would be primarily to areas that are already disturbed - the new bridge is in the vicinity of the old bridge and portions of the old trail.
- There are shorter segments of slopes that are equal to or over 5% – making the trail usable by a wider section of the community.
- It will allow for a more open view along its length, and be more visible to security personnel – therefore responsive to safety concerns.

Design Benefits to Selection of Preferred Alternative 2

One of the most significant directives and desires of DHCA leadership was the importance of design. Having received a Priority Places designation from the State of Maryland, the consultant team was directed to design a “signature” concept while adhering to the, “technical” Program of Requirements. From a “design” perspective, Alternative 2 is more aesthetically dramatic. The curvilinear alignment offers users an experience rather than just a means of functional connection. Views of the bridge change as one approaches and views of the bridge super structure and rail are more dynamic than a “straight” solution.

ADA Compliance

As previously mentioned, the project will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines and standards. The specific standards that the project will adhere to are those as described in the “Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, Final Report” dated September 19, 1999. The pedestrian/bicycle link that this project consists of will be designated as a trail as defined in this document: "A route that is designed, constructed, or designated for recreational pedestrian use or provided as a pedestrian alternative to vehicular routes within a transportation system." ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG) are being followed for any sidewalks connecting the trail to buildings.

Security, Lighting and Maintenance Issues

The trail should feel safe for users, but also be designed so that it can be easily monitored and doesn't provide opportunities that would facilitate criminal activity. Visibility should be maximized for the entire length of the trail to allow for security patrol surveillance. More specifically, it should allow for a police cruiser to pass by and make a quick assessment of the trail. Plantings and other design elements must comply with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPETD).

A viewshed will be created around the bridge for a quick assessment by the police cruisers from the Library parking lot or the Community Center turn-around. The trail and bridge will be lighted and the bridge structure will be made of lightweight material for a slim unobtrusive design.

The current path is used at night and the new one will be designed for 24-hour use. Lighting is very important for creating a safe nighttime environment. Appropriate light level targets will be determined during final design development and may be higher than the minimum standard if needed for maximum security. However, prevention of glare into the adjacent apartment area is also important.

The walkway and bridge will be easily accessible for maintenance. Design elements will be graffiti resistant and minimally affected by vandalism. Materials will be durable, but replaceable, and require minimum maintenance.

Environmental Protection, Landscaping, and Storm Water Management

The project site is in a wooded stream valley. As such, it is a more sensitive and stringently regulated landscape. The project will preserve the existing environmental character of the woodland, enhance the woodlands with plantings and eradicate exotic and invasive species in the trail area. The alignment of the trail and structure should have minimal environmental impacts to the creek, floodplain and surrounding flora, fauna and existing woodlands. Landscape plantings will be provided and be native species that are attractive and low maintenance. Plantings will comply with CPTED standards.

It is expected that there will be little increased run-off from the project. However, storm water will be managed as necessary to minimize the hydrologic and environmental impacts of the project. The fill soil that had been placed in the floodplain for the construction of the old pathway and bridge will be removed as part of this project. This will be an improvement to the environmental conditions of the site.

Proposed Limits of Disturbance and Construction Impact Reduction

Alternative 2 affects a small number of trees and tree sizes. It disturbs small areas of soil and forest cover. Almost all of Alternative 2 is outside the Priority 1 Forest Area. Part of the project will involve the removal of the existing trail and bridge and also the removal of the fill adjacent to the bridge abutments. The piers for the bridge will occupy a smaller surface area than the existing path, resulting in the project creating less obstruction in the floodplain than what exists today. During construction of the trail, various methods will be used to minimize impact during removal of the existing facilities and new construction.

During following phases of the project, efforts will be made to ensure that construction impacts are reduced as much as possible. There are a number of ways that natural resources may be protected during construction. They may include installing tree protection fencing, root pruning, limiting access routes, installing mulch beds and/or matting along access routes where roots may be impacted, and limiting types of construction equipment around sensitive areas. The low-impact construction equipment may include rubber track equipment, ATV rig, mini-excavators, skid loaders, and smaller trucks and pavers. Measures to be taken during the project will be developed during detailed design and shown on the plans and other bid documents to ensure the potential contractors are aware of the expectations at the time of bid. These measures will then be subject to field inspection and approval during the course of construction.

Proposed Signage:

At this time DHCA is investigating possible wayfinding and trail blazing signs along the trail, so people can find their way from the community center/pool to the library. The

possibility of nature interpretive signs at appropriate locations along the trail is also being considered. An artist is being hired by the Arts Council of Montgomery County to develop some conceptual ideas, make recommendations and cost estimate for CIP funding and community input.

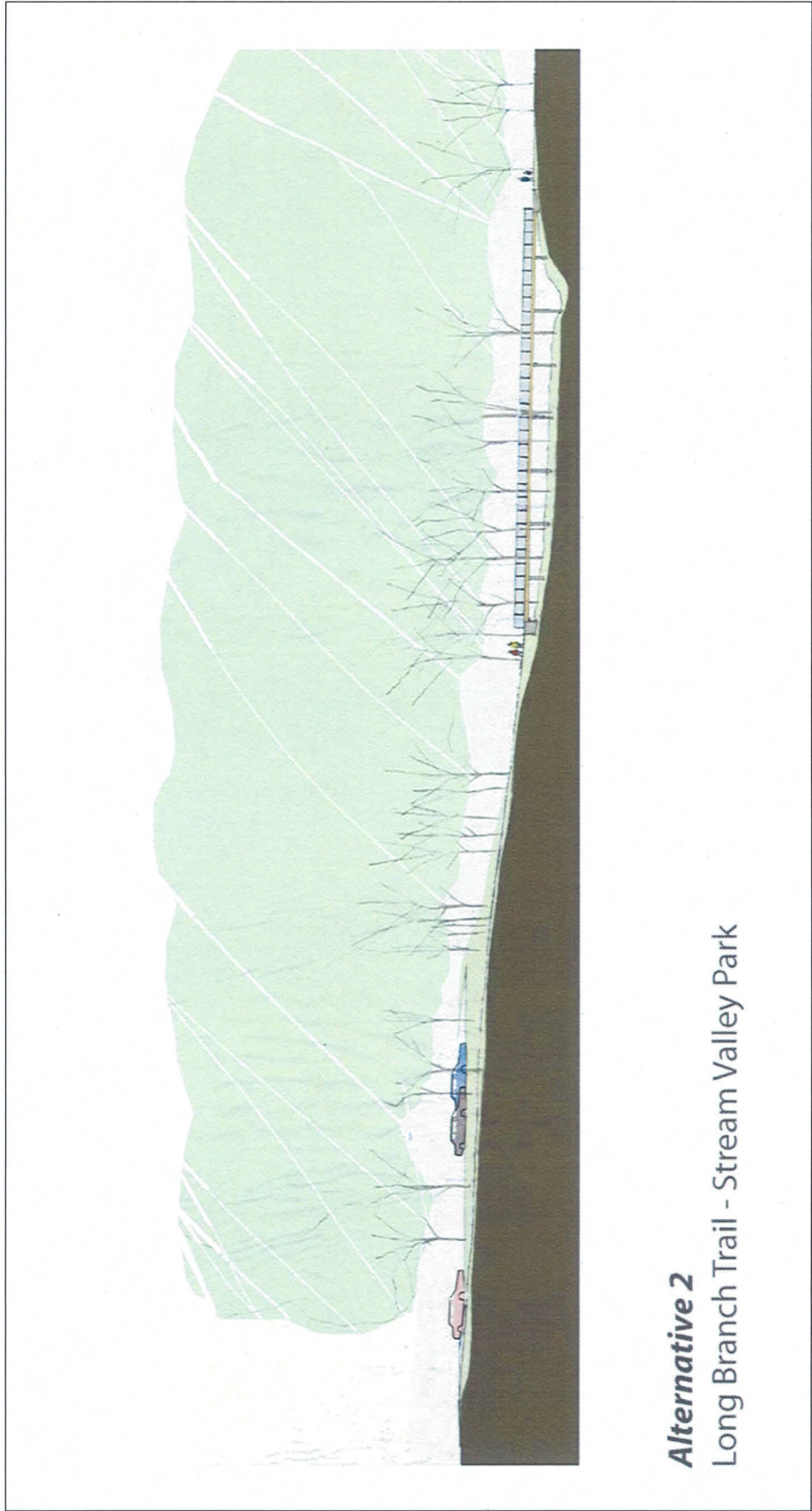
Since the Long Branch Pool and Community Center has a long driveway and parking lot, trail blazing signs are needed for people to find their way to the facilities and the new trail. Trail blazing signs are also needed on the west side for people to come from the library and single-family homes to the community center/pool and multi-family units to the east.

Costs

The total cost of the project is estimated to be approximately \$1,700,000. The following cost table includes a preliminary breakdown of costs that may be revised during the final design stage.

Long Branch Walkway Bridge Project - Estimated Costs

ITEM	DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	EXTENDED PRICE Dollars
1-2	Total Demolition Cost	\$ 31,000.00
3-5	Total Earthwork Cost	\$ 10,270.00
6	Total Structural Cost	\$ 673,750.00
7-8	Total Concrete & Paving Costs	\$ 41,250.00
9-10	Total Drainage Costs	\$ 10,500.00
11-17	Total Electrical Cost	\$ 75,850.00
18	Total Site Furnishings	\$ 10,000.00
19-20	Total Landscaping	\$ 80,000.00
21-22	Total Miscellaneous	\$ 45,000.00
	DESIGN COSTS	\$ <u>230,000.00</u>
	SUBTOTAL	\$ <u>1,207,620.00</u>
	30% CONTINGENCY	\$ <u>362,286.00</u>
	ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	\$ <u>115,000.00</u>
	TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS	\$ <u>1,684,906.00</u>



Alternative 2
Long Branch Trail - Stream Valley Park

Attachment 1



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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 14, 2007

TO: Tanya Schmeiler, Department of Parks; Park Planning and Stewardship
VIA: Jorge Valladares, P.E., Countywide Planning Division, Environmental Planning
FROM: Marion Clark, Planning Department, CWP, Environmental Planning

SUBJECT: Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan

Mandatory Referral No. 07901-DH&CA-1 Long Branch Stream Valley Park - Trail Bridge and Library Sidewalk

Environmental Planning staff recommends **approval** of this Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan with the following conditions:

- Submit a Tree Save Plan prepared and signed by a certified arborist or licensed forester showing the following items:
 - Specifications about asphalt removal and soil reconditioning where the existing path will be removed.
 - Tree protection fence shown in detail and in plan on edges of forest where cut is occurring.
 - Tighten grading closer to path and move tree protection fencing about 5' – 10' closer to new path in order to save 28" Tulip Poplar and improve conditions for 48" Tulip Poplar on the north side of the trail.
 - Save the 28" Tulip Poplar on the south side of the trail by realigning the walkway leading to the apartments.
 - Remove root pruning in areas of fill.
 - Include forest impact notes and tree care notes for pre and post construction activities.
- Approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan must be coordinated with Forest Conservation Plan.
- Reduce reforestation area shown on Landscape Plan to preserve open view through floodplain for security.

Discussion

The proposal for a replacement trail bridge over the Long Branch tributary is an exercise in balancing human needs with preserving natural resources. Since the existing trail does not

meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, the new trail and bridge couldn't be constructed in the existing alignment. The new bridge spans the floodplain at a higher elevation, requiring a new trail alignment, additional cutting and filling, and forest removal through the stream valley and floodplain.

Although the conditions listed above are for a wood bridge structure and paved trail, detailed in the submitted drawings, these drawings will change to reflect a steel bridge most recently agreed upon by the Department of Parks and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. This change will result in a slightly different trail alignment, which has not yet been worked out or submitted. If the new plan results in a major amendment to the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan, which is any forest clearing over 5000 square feet, either because of construction activities or trail alignment, the new Forest Conservation and Tree Save Plan must return to the Planning Board to be approved.

Forest Conservation

A Forest Conservation Plan was submitted along with an approved Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation. Reforestation requirements can be met on site as illustrated on the submitted Landscape Plan. The plan shows 0.25 acres reforested area meeting the requirement of 0.19 acres. But part of the reforestation is shown in a viewshed, south of the trail, that must be kept clear for police security. In order to preserve a clear view, 0.06 acres of floodplain reforestation must be removed on the Landscape Plan.

Although subject to change, the submitted plan indicates critical root zone encroachment of greater than 30% to 6 significant and specimen trees. Reducing impact to critical root zones to below 30% using the conditions listed above will greatly increase the probability of preserving two of the trees (28" Tulip Poplar north of trail and 28" Tulip Poplar south of trail).

Environmental Guidelines

After multiple alignments were reviewed, the field was narrowed to two preferred alignments. There were marginal environmental differences between the final alignments with both sited to avoid steep slopes, minimize floodplain fill, and avoid and minimize forest disturbance and significant and specimen trees.

Water Quality

The site is in the Long Branch tributary of the Sligo Creek Watershed. Designated Use I by the Maryland Department of the Environment, the tributary water is suitable for water contact recreation and protection of aquatic life. Because the stream and habitat conditions are poor, the Montgomery County Countywide Stream Protection Strategy (CSPS) considers this tributary a Watershed Restoration area where it is appropriate to seek innovative ways to coordinate stormwater management improvements.

Stormwater Management

The Department of Permitting Services will approve the Stormwater Management Plan prior to issuing sediment and erosion control permits.

Attachment 2



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

May 15, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tanya Schmieler, Park Planner, Park Planning and Stewardship Division

VIA: Mike Riley, Chief, Park Development Division
Patricia McManus, Design Supervisor, Park Development Division

FROM: Brenda J. Iraola, Landscape Architect, Park Development Division

SUBJECT: Long Branch Walkway-Bridge Facility Plan

The Montgomery County Department of Parks, Park Development Division, has coordinated the design of the Facility Plan walkway-bridge with pertinent Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) staff representing various professional areas: environmental planning, horticulture and arboriculture, natural resources, community-based planning, engineering, construction management, central maintenance, park police, park management, park planning, and landscape architecture. Staff comments, from the various professions, are integrated into the conditions listed within this report. The primary issues are connectivity, safety, aesthetic design, and environmental stewardship. An existing bridge and trail will be removed and replaced as part of this project.

The facility plan design has also been coordinated with The Department of Housing and Community Affairs. They are funding the project and utilizing consultant services for the bridge and trail design. The next two phases for the project include the Detailed Design Phase and the Construction Phase.

The Park Development Division recommends approval of the Facility Plan with the following conditions:

- 1. Technical Review and Park Permit** – The Department of Housing and Community Affairs will need to prepare detailed design and construction documents with technical specifications that comply with the M-NCPPC, Park Development Division, technical specifications and standards for design and construction as well as comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act for accessibility. Plans shall be submitted for technical review at 50% design, at the same time plans are submitted for other agency approvals. The

applicant shall address all comments raised at the Detailed Design Phase prior to completion of 100% documents and issuance of the Park Permit. The applicant shall be required to provide construction oversight and material testing associated with the project. Certified As-Built drawings shall be submitted to M-NCPPC confirming that construction meets the M-NCPPC approved plans and specifications. The plans must meet all local, state or federal codes, as applicable. The Landscape Plan, Reforestation Plan and Lighting Plan are submitted for the Mandatory Referral as 30% plans and are to be revised to include additional information to meet park permit requirements. At the Detailed Design Phase, the applicant shall submit for review the 50% Landscape Plan, Reforestation Plan and the Lighting Plan. These plans shall be revised per the requests of the MNCPPC staff prior to submittal for the approval for park permit.

2. **Trail** – The trail shall be a minimum of 8 feet wide (2% maximum cross slope) with 2-foot grass shoulders (maximum 4% cross slope) on both sides unless otherwise specified by M-NCPPC staff. The trail shall be sited to minimize environmental impacts. A profile of the bridge and trail alignment, showing existing and proposed grades, shall be submitted for review and approval by M-NCPPC staff. All trees, along the bridge and trail alignment, shall be limbed up to a minimum 12-foot height to provide for free travel of both police cruisers and maintenance trucks. The trail and bridge shall be built to meet American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. A striped crosswalk and curb ramp shall be provided at the trail entrances to meet the Department of Public Works and Transportation standards to connect the trail to the Long Branch Library and Community Center sidewalk. Prior to Park Permit, a Trail / Signage Plan shall be reviewed and approved by the M-NCPPC staff. Signage shall be provided as required by M-NCPPC standards, which prohibits unauthorized motor vehicles.

3. **Bridge** - The bridge shall be designed to be aesthetically pleasing with minimal impact to the natural resources in the park, provide connectivity, and promote safety. Since the bridge will be owned and maintained by the M-NCPPC, the bridge design shall be low maintenance and provide an average life cycle of 50 years.

Prior to Park Permit, the MNCPPC recommends that the DHCA consult with the Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T) Transportation Design Section for the bridge design, structural plans, and construction management requirements of the project. The Bridge Structure Plan shall be designed and sealed by a Registered Professional Structural Engineer licensed in Maryland and shall bear his/her stamp and signature on all plans and specifications. The plans shall include design of the abutments, as well as the approaches to the bridge and shall provide technical information for removal and replacement of the bridge and trail with minimal impact on the existing natural resources. The Bridge Structure Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC Construction Section for bridge material type and location. The bridge shall be designed as a minimum 10-foot clear width and shall provide a 10,000 lb. live load. Railings shall be a minimum 42-inch height. The bridge material shall be a material that is graffiti resistant and allows for easy cleaning.

The 170-foot (approximate) length bridge shall be constructed as a steel stringer bridge, with steel or concrete piers, concrete abutments, and a maximum of two to four spans, unless otherwise approved by the MNCPPC. The steel stringers shall be made of weathering steel and shall be constructed from high-strength, self-weathering, low alloy, atmospheric corrosion resistant steel. The pier locations shall be adjusted accordingly to provide

maximum clearance of stream banks. Pedestrian access shall be maintained as much as possible during construction, or alternative routes shall be designated. The floodplain fill soil, presently existing near the park bridge abutments, shall be removed and the existing floodplain shall be restored to its natural grade.

4. Lighting – Prior to Park Permit, a Photometric Plan and Lighting Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC. The lighting provided shall maintain the current lighting along the existing trail and bridge for security purposes and facial recognition. Protective coverings shall be provided over the lights to prevent vandalism. The light fixtures shall be no more than 20-feet in height using metal halide lighting with a full cut-off light fixture and a housing shield to reduce sky glow and glare onto the adjacent residential apartments; lighting shall also be vandal resistant. Lighting shall also be integrated into the bridge railing system where possible.

5. Landscaping and Reforestation - Prior to Park Permit, a Landscape and Reforestation Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC. The plan shall comply with applicable M-NCPPC technical specifications, including deer protection measures and removal or eradication of invasive species. The Landscape Plan shall coordinate with the Planting Design Concept (narrative) and provide accurate plant species names per M-NCPPC standards for landscape plant material that is native/ornamental, disease resistant, deer resistant, and is not on the exotic and invasive species list. The plan shall provide information pertaining to eradication of plant types and the techniques/methods shall be specified. All trees shall be minimum 2-2.5 inch caliper for all plantings at Long Branch. The MNCPPC staff shall provide to DHCA a tree list of species that are appropriate for landscape purposes as well as upland reforestation/lowland reforestation prior to submittal for review and approval of plans. A maintenance contract shall be required for watering the plant material at Long Branch for at least one growing season.

6. Tree Preservation - Prior to Park Permit, plans shall be submitted for review and approval by the M-NCPPC for tree preservation methods including low-impact construction/equipment and protection measures specified for protection of natural resources during construction. All plans shall comply with the M-NCPPC technical specifications and details. All root pruning will be performed with a Vermeer RT 200 root pruner or approved equal and directed in the field prior to any demolition of existing structures and prior to any construction.

7. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design - Prior to Park Permit the M-NCPPC Park Police shall review and approve plans for compliance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

8. Development Agreement – Prior to Park Permit, a development agreement shall be executed which outlines construction and maintenance responsibilities of Montgomery County DHCA and the M-NCPPC for this project.

9. Stormwater Management – Trail pavement shall not be porous in parks due to the high maintenance requirements. Prior to park permit, a Stormwater Management Plan shall be approved by the Department of Permitting Services.

M-NCPPC PARK POLICE COMMENTS

The following comments were submitted by Park Police, and are included separately at the request of Park Police. These comments are pertinent to the design and layout of the trail and bridge design to help deter crime and vandalism and promote safety. These comments were integrated into the conditions listed above.

a. **ALIGNMENT** - The alignment of the bridge is not an issue, just as long as the trail is wide enough for vehicles to travel along the trail. It is also recommended that the trail width extend beyond the paved portion a certain distance that allows for persons to walk without fear of being attacked by a person lying in wait in the underbrush or behind a large tree. The trail should be as straight as possible so that a clear line of sight, or as clear as possible as is permitted. This is suggested in hope that a person can see as far ahead as possible so that other trail users are seen on approach.

b. **SLOPES AND GRADES** - The slope and grade does not appear to be an issue. The only concern again would be that a slope that allows for concealment for any person who may be lying wait.

c. **BRIDGE** - The straight bridge is the preferred bridge; however, park police have agreed to support a curved bridge. The straight bridge allows for a police cruiser to pass with a lesser chance of a collision. Officers will use the bridge as a go between, between the Long Branch Community Center and the community park off of Garland. In addition to this, once on the bridge that vehicle operator will be concentrating on traversing the bridge and having the ability to look up and ahead will give the operator the chance to spot pedestrians before they or the officer enters the bridge itself. It should be noted that the bridge will not be used as a roadway; but nonetheless, both the park police and maintenance will use it. Placing signs at both ends prohibiting vehicle traffic, except for "authorized vehicles" may be needed. The bridging material should also be of a material that allows for easy clean up. This area is notorious for gang activity, which is accompanied by graffiti. The bridge will surely suffer vandalism and this may be quite regularly.

d. **DISTURBANCE** - The trail should have a buffer of some sort (grass - cut regularly) to prevent heavy underbrush from growing and impeding along the paved and natural buffer between the trail and the wood line. The trees should also be trimmed to a height that allows for persons to travel freely without obstruction and if on a slope, allow for visibility ahead. Tree height should also include the free travel of both police cruisers and maintenance trucks.

e. **LIGHTING** - Lighting should be bright enough to allow for comfort during evening hours. The reality of this trail is that it is used at all hours of the day by persons who live in the apartments adjacent to the park. It may be beneficial to have protective coverings over the lights that prevent the lights from being damaged by projectiles of some sort. Maintenance should be quick to respond once a light is deemed inoperable.

Attachment 3




MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

May 15, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tanya Schmieler, Planner Coordinator, Park Planning and Resource Analysis

FROM: Malaika Abernathy, Senior Planner, 301-495-1336 
Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team, Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral for Long Branch Walkway - Bridge

Community-Based Planning staff recommends **approval** of this plan.

Site Description

The site is located within the approved and adopted December 2000, East Silver Spring Master Plan area within the portion of the Long Branch community adjoining the Flower Village Center. The application submitted by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs proposes a trail and bridge between the Long Branch Community Center and the Library. The project involves removing the existing trail and bridge and replacing it with a new ADA accessible trail and bridge. The trail will encourage improved pedestrian and bicycle accessibility between the Recreation Center and the Library. It will also greatly improve safety within the area by allowing public safety and Park personnel to access and maintain the proposed pedestrian walkway-bridge.

Master Plan Guidelines

The proposed project resulted from a process that analyzed eight alternative bridge alignments. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs and the M-NCPPC chose Alternative 2.

The Community-Based Planning staff reviewed Alternative 2 for compliance with the December 2000 East Silver Spring Master Plan, which acknowledges the need for improved pedestrian access within and surrounding the Long Branch and Flower Village Center neighborhoods on Piney Branch Avenue. The Master Plan specifically recommends providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access, particularly on countywide trails, to improve overall connectivity within the existing park-trail system.

The Long Branch Task Force and ULI Technical Assistance Panel study in 2005, also support the proposed project recommendations as a major priority in improving and revitalizing the Long Branch community. The study acknowledges that the proposed pedestrian connection is highly supported by the community and encouraged to move forward.

MA:tv: G:/Abernathy/Long Branch Memo

8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 | Director's Office: 301-495-4500 | Fax: 301-495-1510

www.MontgomeryPlanning.org

Attachment 4 - Mandatory Notification Letter (English Version)



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

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Dear Community Residents:

This is to notify you that the Montgomery County Planning Board has received a Mandatory Referral* application from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs to improve the Long Branch walkway and bridge. The Board will be making a recommendation on this project at their regular meeting on Thursday May 31, 2007. This meeting is the community's opportunity to provide input to the Planning Board on this project.

The objective of this project is to provide a safe ADA compliant pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Long Branch Community Center, the Long Branch Library, and the communities on both sides of the Long Branch stream. The current path and bridge will be improved and re-aligned for safety and convenient access and portions will be elevated to provide accessibility to persons with disabilities. The trail/elevated walkway will blend with the natural woodland setting and is being designed to minimize environmental impacts. Previous community meetings were held in August and October 2006 by a subcommittee the Long Branch Advisory Committee. This project is proposed to be completed by December 2008.

The Long Branch Walkway-Bridge project is the first stage of a proposed series of linkages in the Long Branch community that will connect the high density residential areas with the Village Center and other key activity/service centers such as the Long Branch Library, playground and Long Branch Community Center through signage and enhanced streetscaping.

No further notices will be sent out concerning this property disposition. A full review by the Planning Board is scheduled for May 31, 2007. Evening has been requested, but it is not guaranteed. The time is subject to change due to fluctuations in the Boards scheduled items. The final notice of the hearing will be published in the Planning Board's weekly agenda, which can be viewed on the Planning Board's web page at <http://www.mc-mncppc.org>. The Planning Board's approval and comments are advisory in that the statute allows the applicant to overrule the Planning Board's decision and proceed. However, as this project involves park property, the conditions regarding park property are binding, and the applicant will be required to comply with the conditions prior to obtaining a park permit and before any construction on park property can occur.

* Mandatory Referral Projects-- Pursuant to Section 7-112 of the state law, the Mandatory Referral law requires all federal, state, and local governments and public utilities to submit proposed projects in the regional district for review and approval by the Planning Board.

If any members of your community have any concerns or comments you may sign up to testify at the May 31 meeting by calling 301-495-4600 or at the meeting prior to the beginning of the item. Written testimony is encouraged and you may submit any official written comments for the mandatory referral record to: Chairman Royce Hanson, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910 or Chairman@mncppc-mc.org by May 30, 2007.

The Planning Board encourages the participation of individuals with disabilities in all its program and services. For information on meetings in progress, call 301-495-1333. For other information, call 301-495-4600 or the TTY (teletypewriter used by persons with hearing or speech impairments) at 301-495-1331. Meeting agendas and other planning and parks information are available on the Internet at www.mc-mncppc.org

Sincerely,

Tanya Schmieler
Park Planning Coordinator
Park Planning and Stewardship Division

Summary of Mandatory Referral Project- Technical Information

PROJECT: Long Branch Walkway-Bridge
APPLICANT: Department of Housing and Community Affairs
ADDRESS: 100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor, Rockville, MD 20850
MASTER PLAN: Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan, February 2000
PLANNING BOARD DATE: May 31, 2007 (please check schedule to verify)
APPLICATION NUMBER: Mandatory Referral Number MR # 07901-DH&CA-1.
LOCATION TO REVIEW APPLICATION: M-NCPPC, 8787 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (southeast corner of Georgia Ave. and Silver Spring St.)
CONTACT PERSON: Tanya Schmieler (301) 650-4392
Tanya.Schmieler@mncppc-mc.org

Attachment 4 - Mandatory Notification Letter (Spanish Version)



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

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Martes, 24 de abril, 2007

Estimado Miembro de Nuestra Comunidad:

A través de la presente, queremos notificarle que la Comisión de Parques y Planificación de Maryland ha recibido una aplicación del Departamento de Vivienda y Asuntos Comunitarios del Condado de Montgomery para hacerle mejoras al camino y puente de Long Branch. La Junta de Planificación hará sus recomendaciones sobre este proyecto durante su reunión del Jueves, 31 de mayo, 2007. La reunión es una oportunidad para hacerle llegar su opinión a los miembros de la Junta sobre dicho proyecto.

El objetivo de este proyecto es de proveer una conexión segura para peatones y bicicletas entre el Centro Comunitario de Long Branch, la biblioteca de Long Branch y los dos vecindarios a ambos lados del río de Long Branch. El proyecto también se asegurará que el camino y el puente sean accesibles para todos, de acuerdo al Acto de Americanos con Discapacidades. El camino combinará con la naturaleza que lo rodea y esta siendo diseñado para minimizar los impactos ambientales. El proyecto esta propuesto para completarse en diciembre 2008.

El proyecto Camino-Puente de Long Branch (en inglés: The Long Branch Walkway-Bridge project) es la primera etapa de una serie de conexiones en la comunidad de Long Branch que conectarán las zonas residenciales con el centro de la comunidad (o Village Center) y otros centros de actividad y servicio como son la biblioteca, el parque y el Centro Comunitario de Long Branch usando letreros y otras formas de embellecimiento del área.

Este es el único anuncio que se mandará sobre esta aplicación. La Junta revisará este proyecto el 31 de mayo, 2007. No hay una hora específica en la que lo revisarán, aunque esperamos sea después de las 6 de la tarde. La hora cambia con las fluctuaciones en la agenda de la Junta. El anuncio final de la hora en que la Junta revisará este proyecto se publicará en la agenda semanal de la Junta, la cual puede encontrarse en la siguiente página de Internet www.mc-mncppc.org. Los comentarios y aprobación de la Junta de Planificación, en este caso son solo recomendaciones, pues en esta situación, por ser el tipo de proyecto que es, los estatutos permiten al Departamento de Vivienda y Asuntos Comunitarios puede revocar la decisión de la Junta y proceder con el proyecto como ellos decidan. Aunque, este proyecto involucra terreno que es propiedad del Departamento de Parques y tendrán que obtener un permiso de parques antes de poder comenzar la construcción.

Si usted o algún miembro de su comunidad tiene algún comentario o inquietud sobre el proyecto, puede testificar durante la reunión del 31 de mayo. Para testificar, puede poner su nombre en la lista antes del 31 de mayo o puede llenar un formulario el mismo día. Para más información y para añadir su nombre a la lista para testificar, por favor llame al 301-495-4912.

También puede mandar testimonio escrito (en Inglés ó Español) con sus comentarios o inquietudes sobre el proyecto al Presidente de la Junta: Chairman Royce Hanson, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910 or Chairman@mncppc-mc.org antes del 30 de mayo, 2007.

Las agendas de todas las reuniones de la Junta de Planificación y otra información sobre el Departamento de Parques y el Departamento de Planificación se encuentran en la siguiente página del Internet www.mc-mncppc.org

Atentamente,

Tanya Schmieler
Coordinadora de Planificación de Parques

Resumen del Proyecto – Información Técnica

PROYECTO: Long Branch Walkway-Bridge

APLICANTE: Departamento de Vivienda y Asuntos Comunitarios (Department of Housing and Community Affairs)

DIRECCIÓN: 100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor, Rockville, MD 20850

PLAN MAESTRO: Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan, February 2000

FECHA PARA LA JUNTA DE PLANIFICACIÓN: May 31, 2007 (por favor revise el horario para confirmar)

NUMERO DE APLICACIÓN: Mandatory Referral Number MR # 07901-DH&CA-1.

LUGAR DONDE PUEDE REVISAR LA APLICACIÓN: M-NCPPC, 8787 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 2091(esquina sudeste de Georgia Ave. y Silver Spring St.)

CONTACTO: Tanya Schmieler (301) 650-4392
Tanya.Schmieler@mncppc-mc.org

CONTACTO EN ESPAÑOL: Alexandra Teaff (301) 495-4912
Alexandra.Teaff@mncppc.org



The existing Long Branch Trail