



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

MCPB Item # _____
June 16, 2016

MEMORANDUM

June 9, 2016

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MGR*
Mitra Pedoeem, Acting Deputy Director of Parks *mit*
Dr. John E. Hench, Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division *Jehench*
Michael Ma, Acting Chief, Park Development Division *mm*

FROM: William E. Gries, Park Development Division *weg*

SUBJECT: Authorization to Exchange Land with Montgomery County, Maryland as Mitigation for the Platt Ridge Drive Extended Project.

Recommended Action:

The Department of Parks recommends that the Montgomery County Planning Board approve the below described exchange of land with Montgomery County, Maryland to satisfy the requirement that the County find replacement property for parkland lost to the construction of Platt Ridge Drive Extended through a portion of the Commission's 31.7 acre North Chevy Chase Local Park.

The recommended exchange will involve the Commission conveying to the County 1.50 acres, more or less, in North Chevy Chase Local Park, as generally shown on Attachment 1 and as more specifically shown on Attachment 2. In return, the County will convey to the Commission 4.55 acres, more or less, in Germantown Town Center Urban Park, as generally shown on Attachment 3 and more specifically shown on Attachment 4. As a result of this exchange, the Commission will have a net increase of 3.05 acres in titled parkland acreage.

Background:

On July 10, 2014 the Planning Board approved the Mandatory Referral on the Platt Ridge Drive Extended Project, CIP No. 50120, Mandatory Referral No. MR2014012. As part of this Mandatory Referral process the Board, in addition to considering the Planning Department's recommendations in this regard, also considered comments from the Department to Parks that included recommended conditions for approving the Mandatory Approval. Copies of both the Planning and Parks Department's staff reports regarding the Mandatory Referral are included as Attachments 5 & 6. Also included as Attachment 7 is the Planning Board's final Mandatory Referral approval letter to DOT dated July 18, 2014.

One of the Department of Park's primary concerns with the Platt Ridge Drive Extended Project was the commitment of Montgomery County DOT to mitigate the impacts of this project on North Chevy Chase Local Park through the acquisition of adequate replacement parkland. To that end, Park's identified three options for possible replacement parkland that met Park's replacement criteria. These three options were:

- 1) Approximately 7 acres of Audubon Naturalist Society property on Jones Mill Road, adjacent to Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, Unit 2.
- 2) Approximately 0.9 acres of the Fred Winkler property near Clean Drinking Spring in Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, Unit 2, and 0.9 acres of the Vicente Murrell property known as the Boundary Stone North site.
- 3) Approximately 15.9 acres of SHA property across Ednor Road from the Woodlawn Mansion.

While the three replacement parkland options suggested by Parks were thought to best suit Parks needs in this regard, they did not limit the search for replacement parkland, but only identified options that both Parks and DOT staff thought were worth pursuing.

According to Bruce Johnston, Chief of DOT's Transportation Engineering Division, the County pursued these three options but was unable to acquire any of the desired properties for a variety of reasons. Option 1 was not viable as the purchase price was estimated to be \$3 million, a value that was too high in relation to the Platt Ridge Drive taking, Option 2 was not viable as neither of the owners was a willing seller and DOT was not disposed to acquiring either of these properties through an exercise of its condemnation authority, and Option 3 was not viable also because of costs (more than \$1.6 million) and by the complication created by the original owner having a "right of first refusal" to re-acquire the property from SHA. At one-point, DOT offered to compensate the Commission \$860,000, the appraised values of the properties in Option 2, in lieu of replacing the parkland, but that was not acceptable to Park staff.

In subsequent discussions with Mr. Johnston regarding possible substitute parkland mitigation sites for Options 1, 2, and 3 mentioned above, the idea of having the County convey fee simple title to the 4.55 acres it owns in Germantown Town Center Urban Park, behind the Germantown Library, was suggested by Park staff. Presently the Commission only has authority to use this County property under an Executive Order that can be rescinded at any time, if the County Executive so chooses. This property was not originally purchased as parkland through the Parks CIP but was acquired as excess land to the Germantown Library site when it was acquired by the County in 1999. In that the County was not willing to convey this property to the Commission when staff requested it prior to the start of park construction, the Commission was only granted an Executive Order that "assigned" use of the property to the Commission as parkland. While a rescission of this Executive Order is unlikely, the prospect of obtaining fee simple ownership in the 4.55 acres at Germantown Town Center Urban Park, in which Parks recently invested more than \$7.0 million in park improvements, is very attractive. Also, by having this property conveyed by the County to the Commission, the Commission would hold fee title in the contiguous 7.28 +/- acres that make up the park. As it stands now, the County owns 4.55 acres of the park and the Commission owns 2.73 acres of the park, which is in two non-contiguous parcels.

The County evaluated the conveyance of the land it owns at Germantown Town Center Urban Park as replacement parkland for the Platt Ridge Drive taking and confirmed that it is agreeable to this exchange as indicated in the letter dated February 25, 2016 included as Attachment 8. In addition to this exchange, DOT is still committed to performing non-native invasive plant species removal in the remaining forested areas of North Chevy Chase Local Park at an estimated cost of \$113,000; it is still

committed to redesigning the bioswale associated with the Platt Ridge Drive Extended construction project as recommended by the Department of Parks; and it agrees that the Commission will not have to provide title to the right-of-way taking area in North Chevy Chase Local Park until such time as the Commission has received the deed to the replacement parkland.



Summary and Conclusion:

Staff is recommending that the Montgomery County Planning Board approve the exchange of 1.50 acres, more or less, of parkland owned by the Commission at North Chevy Chase Local Park for 4.55 acres, more or less, of County owned land at Germantown Town Center Urban Park, as described herein. This proposed exchange is being recommended to accommodate Montgomery County DOT's Platt Ridge Drive Extended Project which was approved, with conditions, by the Montgomery County Planning Board as Mandatory Referral No. MR2014012 on July 10, 2014. This approval will need to be affirmed by the full Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission through an adoption of the full Commission Resolution included as Attachment 9.

cc: John Nissel
Bill Tyler
Jim Poore
Antonio Duval
Brooke Farquhar
Megan Chung
Kristi Williams
Mohammed Turay
David Vismara
Larry Cole

North Chevy Chase Local Park



Parkland Outlines
Status & Owner
 M-NCPPC Parks
 Other Parks

1 inch = 300 feet



Map Compiled: 5/13/2016

Map Compiled by Land Acquisition Specialist
 Based on M-NCPPC GIS Layers
 For Planning Purposes Only



TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT

1	N 79°22'55" E	44.5'
2	S 64°39'57" W	30.30'
3	S 00°49'02" W	30.30'
4	N 12°01'55" W	39.81'

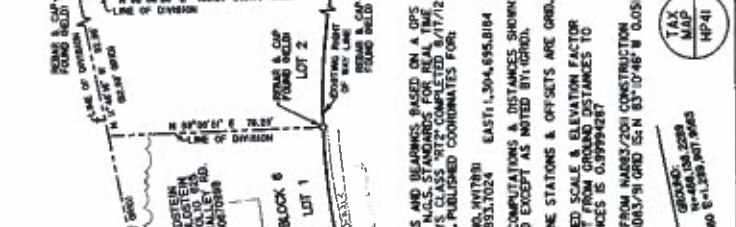
TEMPORARY EASEMENT AREA
419.50 FT. OR 0.0090 AREA
SHOWN THUS: [Hatched Pattern]

MARILAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION ACCOUNT NO. D082852

FEE SCHEDULE

1	N 00°09'24" W	68.81'
2	N 20°34'44" E	38.81'
3	N 34°22'20" E	45.25'
4	N 51°52'53" E	57.81'
5	S 12°01'55" E	59.89'
6	S 15°01'50" E	271.36'
7	S 12°04'50" E	148.97'
8	N 79°52'08" W	226.58'
9	N 15°47'11" E	283.97'

FEE SIMPLE LOTS 1-9
68,111 SQ. FT. SHOWN THUS: [Stippled Pattern]



SURVEYORS CERTIFICATE:

I HEREBY CERTIFY TO THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION THAT THE PLAT SHOWN HEREON IS CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE PERSONALLY CONDUCTED A FIELD SURVEY OF THE LAND SHOWN HEREON ON AN ACTUAL FIELD SURVEY COMPLETED ON OCTOBER 4, 2012 AND ADDITIONAL WORK COMPLETED ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2013 AND THAT IT DELINEATES THE LAND TO BE ACCURATED BY MONTGOMERY COUNTY IN CONNECTION WITH THIS ROAD IMPROVEMENT.

THOMAS M. TOMASKI
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SURVEYOR #534
EXPIRES 2/25/2015

TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT

1	N 79°22'55" E	44.5'
2	S 64°39'57" W	30.30'
3	S 00°49'02" W	30.30'
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68,111 SQ. FT. SHOWN THUS: [Stippled Pattern]

RECEIVED
FEB 12 2016
Check of the Circuit Court
Montgomery County, Md.

COORDINATES AND BEARINGS BASED ON A GPS SURVEY CLASS "RT" COMPLETED 8/17/12 USING N.G.S. PUBLISHED COORDINATES FOR: 1845 493 NS NHT80 NORTH 481,853.7024 EAST 1,304,655.8184

ALL AREA COMPUTATIONS & DISTANCES SHOWN ARE GROUND EXCEPT AS NOTED BY GRID.

ALL BASELINE STATIONS & OFFSETS ARE GRID.

THE COMBINED SCALE & ELEVATION FACTOR TO THE CONSTRUCTION DISTANCES IS 0.99994287

THE SHEET FROM MAR03/2011 CONSTRUCTION GRID TO MAR03/11 GRID IS N 83°10'46" W 6,005.4'

PLOT 108-91-81
GRID: 108-91-81
GRID: 108-91-81
GRID: 108-91-81
E-1,289,800.6237

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY ADOPT THIS RIGHT OF WAY PLAT AND CERTIFY THAT A REGISTERED MARILAND LAND SURVEYOR, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE 28, CHAPTER 10, OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY CODE, HAS BEEN ENGAGED TO SET THE RIGHT OF WAY MARKERS SHOWN THUS O.

BRUCE L. JOHNSTON
CHIEF, DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING
DATE: 2/4/2016
MAIL

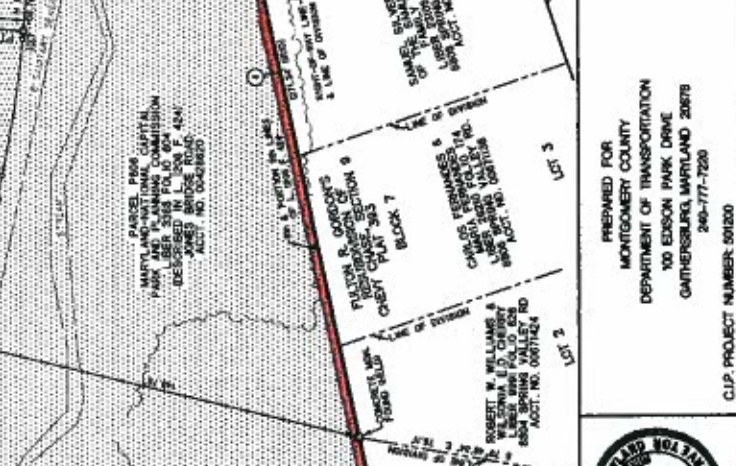


PARCEL FROM CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION ACCOUNT NO. D082852

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TEMPORARY EASEMENT AREA
419.50 FT. OR 0.0090 AREA
SHOWN THUS: [Hatched Pattern]



MARYLAND COORDINATE SYSTEM
NAD 83/2011

PC 505-16 TO CURVE DATA

Q	107°51'27"
D	200.00'
T	108.38'
L	108.38'
E	108.38'

PC 103-41-55 TO CURVE DATA

A	107°51'27"
D	200.00'
T	108.38'
L	108.38'
E	108.38'

PC 103-38-33 TO CURVE DATA

A	107°51'27"
D	200.00'
T	108.38'
L	108.38'
E	108.38'

PARCEL FROM CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION ACCOUNT NO. D082852

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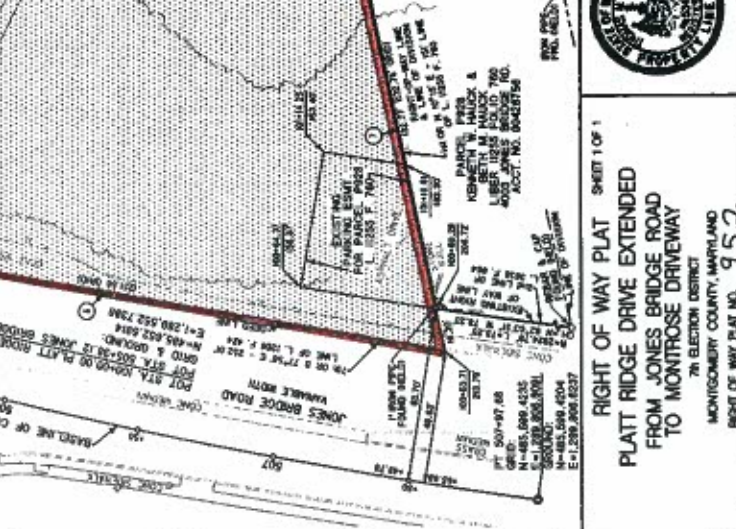
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TEMPORARY EASEMENT AREA
419.50 FT. OR 0.0090 AREA
SHOWN THUS: [Hatched Pattern]



Germantown Town Center Urban Park



**Parkland Outlines
Status & Owner**

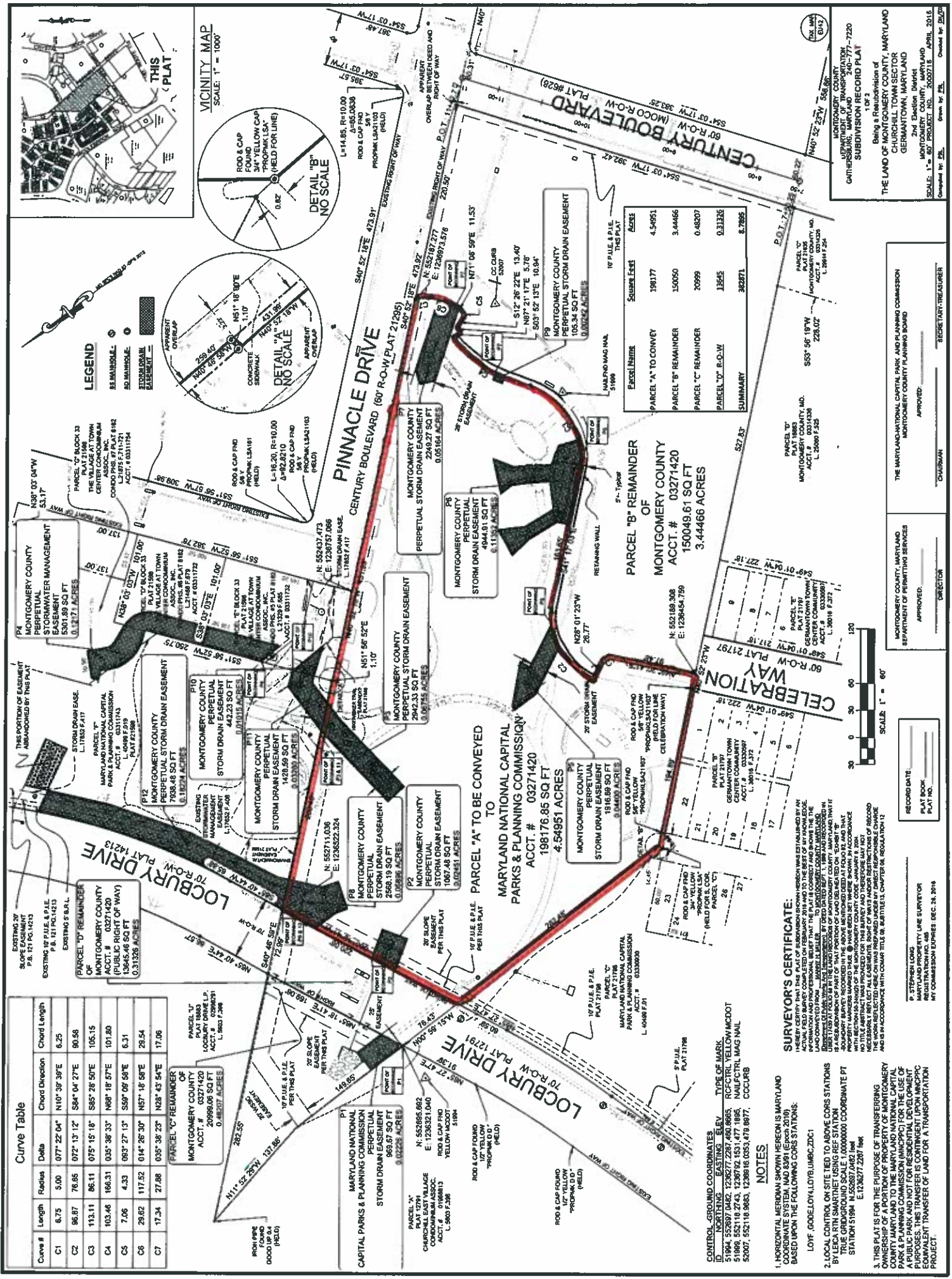
- █ M-NCPPC Parks
- █ Other Parks

1 inch = 200 feet



Map Compiled: 5/13/2016

Map Compiled by Land Acquisition Specialist
Based on M-NCPPC GIS Layers
For Planning Purposes Only



Curve Table

Curve #	Length	Radius	Chord	Chord Direction
C1	6.75	5.00	0.77	N10° 39' 39"E
C2	98.87	78.65	0.72	S84° 04' 27"E
C3	113.11	86.11	0.75	S85° 28' 50"E
C4	103.46	166.31	0.35	N68° 18' 57"E
C5	7.06	4.33	0.31	S59° 09' 58"E
C6	29.62	117.52	0.14	S71° 18' 58"E
C7	17.34	27.86	0.35	N28° 43' 54"E

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE:

I, STEPHEN LONG, being duly sworn, do hereby certify that the foregoing plat is a true and correct representation of the actual field survey completed on February 20th and 21st 2016 and is the best of my knowledge, information and professional belief that the plat is correct and shows the true and correct locations of all lines and boundaries of the subject lots and parcels. I am duly licensed as a Professional Surveyor in the State of Maryland. I am duly licensed as a Professional Surveyor in the State of Maryland. I am duly licensed as a Professional Surveyor in the State of Maryland. I am duly licensed as a Professional Surveyor in the State of Maryland.

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2016
 SURVEYOR: STEPHEN LONG
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

NOTES:

- HORIZONTAL MERIDIAN SHOWN HEREON IS MARYLAND STATE MERIDIAN. ALL DISTANCES AND BEARINGS ARE BASED UPON THE FOLLOWING CORRS STATIONS:
 LOV GOODELOY/LOV/LMB/2DC1
- LOCAL CONTROL ON SITE TIED TO ABOVE CORRS STATIONS BY LEICA ETHI SMARTNET USING REF STATION STATION 51994 N:528277.2207 E:1236271.2207
- THIS PLAT IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRANSFERRING OWNERSHIP OF A PORTION OF PROPERTY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND TO THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS & PLANNING COMMISSION (MNCPPC) FOR THE USE OF A PUBLIC PARK AND NOT FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OR EQUIVALENT TRANSFER OF LAND FOR A TRANSPORTATION PROJECT.

CONTROL GROUND COORDINATES

ID	NORTHING	EASTING	ELEV	TYPE OF MARK
51994	528277.0462	1236277.2207	490.9865	REF CTRL YELLOW WOOD
51995	522118.2743	1236272.1531	477.1095	NALPACTR I/MAG/IN/AL
52007	522118.5663	1236216.0353	479.8877	COCCURE

APPROVED: _____
 DIRECTOR

APPROVED: _____
 CHAIRMAN

APPROVED: _____
 SECRETARY-TREASURER

APPROVED: _____
 THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS AND PLANNING COMMISSION
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

THE LAND OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
 CHURCHILL TOWN SECTOR
 GERMANTOWN, MARYLAND
 2nd Edition District
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
 SCALE: 1" = 80' PROJECT NO. 20052716 APRIL 2016
 Checked by: JLS
 Drawn by: JLS

VICINITY MAP
 SCALE: 1" = 1000'

DETAIL "B" NO SCALE
 (HELD FOR LINE)
 0.42'

DETAIL "A" NO SCALE
 1.10'
 5.12' 26" 22"E 13.40'
 N87° 21' 17"E 5.78'
 S03° 52' 15"E 10.94'

LEGEND

- 1.3 MANSION
- 2.2 MANSION
- 3.3 MANSION
- 4.4 MANSION
- 5.5 MANSION
- 6.6 MANSION

LEGEND

- 1.1 MANSION
- 2.2 MANSION
- 3.3 MANSION
- 4.4 MANSION
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- 6.6 MANSION

LEGEND

- 1.1 MANSION
- 2.2 MANSION
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- 4.4 MANSION
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LEGEND

- 1.1 MANSION
- 2.2 MANSION
- 3.3 MANSION
- 4.4 MANSION
- 5.5 MANSION
- 6.6 MANSION



Platt Ridge Drive Extended Drive, Mandatory Referral No. MR2014012

- Larry Cole, Master Planner, larry.cole@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4528
- Tina Schneider, Senior Planner, tina.schneider@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-2101
- Pam Dunn, Acting Chief, pam.dunn@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-650-5649
-

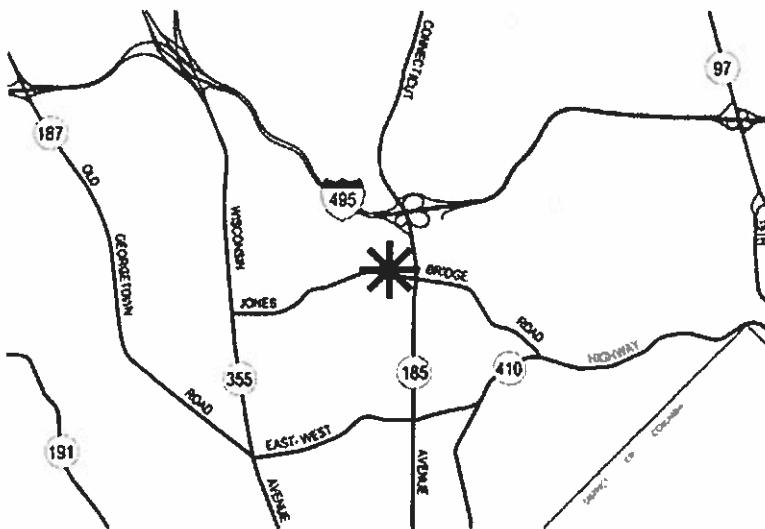
Completed: 07/03/14

Description

This project would construct an extension of the existing two-lane Platt Ridge Drive from its current terminus at Jones Bridge Road to the current terminus of Montrose Driveway just west of Spring Valley Road, a distance of approximately 483 feet. This non-master plan road project is proposed to be constructed through North Chevy Chase Local Park.

Mandatory Referral approval is requested for these improvements. A separate memo will also be provided by Parks staff on park impacts and the disposition of park property.

The project is located within the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan area. See Vicinity Map below.



Summary

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project with comments to MCDOT.

The Platt Ridge Drive Extended project is proposed as the new main entry to the Chevy Chase Valley community to resolve longstanding access issues to and from Jones Bridge Road. This project was

presented to the Board in September 2010 as the solution to avoid an expected safety problem with installing an "interim" traffic signal at Spring Valley Road, which had been requested by Chevy Chase Valley residents to address a neighborhood access problem. Both SHA and MCDOT expected that a signal at this location would cause safety problems, but MCDOT agreed to install it on an interim basis to respond to residents' concerns about a forecast increase in traffic resulting from the 2011 BRAC move of Walter Reed Hospital to the National Military Medical Center (NMMC) in Bethesda. MCDOT stated that they would monitor the safety of the signal but would continue the design of the Platt Ridge Drive Extended project in expectation of the signal's failure.

This project was presented to the Planning Board on April 3, 2014 but action on the submitted Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) had to be deferred because comments had not yet been received from the County Arborist. MCDOT then requested a deferral on the Mandatory Referral also since it could not be approved without an approved FCP. (Following the meeting, the County Attorney submitted an opinion that demonstrated that the project is not required to submit a Forest Conservation Plan for approval. MCDOT has submitted additional information to demonstrate that they are meeting their forest conservation requirements, as discussed in Attachment 1.)

While no action was taken at this meeting, the consensus of the Board appeared to be that our review should not be confined to MCDOT's original justification for the project - whether the traffic signal at Jones Bridge Road and Spring Valley Road had created a safety problem - but whether the proposed new road would serve a more general public benefit. **This memo reflects that broader view.**

The Board also asked MCDOT to provide updated traffic counts and crash rates, which would address the original rationale for the project. The traffic information received from MCDOT since the Board's April 3rd discussion shows that the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) has increased from 18,240 in 2008 to 23,580, a 23% increase. While the number of crashes increased slightly, the large increase in traffic meant that the crash rate declined slightly even with the Spring Valley Road traffic signal.

Since the interim traffic signal at Spring Valley Road has not been shown to be a safety problem, the decision to construct the road must be based more on its ability to provide easier local access and better traffic operations on Jones Bridge Road. As to these objectives:

- The project would provide easier access for Chevy Chase Valley residents during peak hours when westbound Jones Bridge Road traffic may be queued through the Spring Valley Road traffic signal.
- The conversion of the Spring Valley Road intersection to right-in/right-out-only would eliminate some types of potential crashes, possibly leading to a reduction in the current high crash rate on Jones Bridge Road.
- The elimination of conflicting traffic at Spring Valley Road could improve the flow of westbound Jones Bridge Road traffic during evening peak hours.

Achieving good operations for our major roadways is important, but traffic benefits need to be balanced against the impacts of making improvements. The Board's decision on this project requires reconciling its custodial duties in regard to impacts on park property that would be caused by a non-master plan project, as covered by its action on the disposition of park property, with the broader view required for the mandatory referral.

At the April 3rd meeting, the Board also asked MCDOT to redesign the proposed road to address some safety concerns. The redesigned road is much improved over what was previously submitted, but would benefit from additional changes so that it can adequately serve as the main entry to the Chevy Chase Valley neighborhood.

Based on the Board's direction to look at a broader rationale for the proposed project, the receipt of updated traffic and safety information, and the redesign of the proposed Platt Ridge Drive Extended, we recommend the following detailed comments to MCDOT:

Comments to MCDOT

1. This project is approved to ensure permanent adequate access for the Chevy Chase Valley community and to improve safety along Jones Bridge Road.
2. While much improved over the previously submitted design, the horizontal alignment of the proposed road meets only the requirements of a tertiary road and is therefore less than desirable to serve as the primary access to the Chevy Chase Valley community and the Chevy Chase Recreational Association clubhouse and facilities. Consider making further revisions to meet at least secondary road standards; these revisions would likely impact the rear portion of the adjacent private property fronting on Jones Bridge Road.
3. The cost to acquire any park and private property required to construct this road at a satisfactory horizontal and vertical alignment should be reflected in this project's PDF.
4. Non-native Invasive species must be removed from the parkland to be transferred, as well as in the remaining forested area at North Chevy Chase Local Park.
5. For the proposed bioswale:
 - a. Design the bioswale and roadside swale slopes with channel stabilization methods to be non-erosive;
 - b. Stabilize the graded 2:1 side slope with low maintenance ground cover;
 - c. Incorporate underdrains incorporated into the media
 - d. Provide an access path from the road to the bioswales to facilitate future maintenance.

Previous Board action

On September 16, 2010, the Planning Board discussed MCDOT's traffic study of the Chevy Chase Valley area and the potential construction of an extension to Platt Ridge Drive. The Board did not take an official vote but the guidance to MCDOT was that the Board was agreeable to proceeding with the study with the understanding that MCDOT would assess the adequacy of the "interim" traffic signal at Spring Valley Road and Jones Bridge Road and quantify the environmental and park impacts when the project was submitted for the Board's formal review.

The Mandatory Referral of Phases 1 and 2 of the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA's) Jones Bridge Road/Connecticut Avenue intersection project was denied by the Board on July 22, 2010, in part because they felt that inadequate coordination had taken place to address the concerns of the Village of North Chevy Chase and of the residents of the west side of Connecticut Avenue north of Jones Bridge

Road. SHA overruled the Board's denial and proceeded with the project but made access changes along Connecticut Avenue at the residents' request.

In its Mandatory Referral review of Phase 3 of SHA's Jones Bridge Road/Connecticut Avenue intersection project on July 16, 2012, the Board approved the relocation of a portion of the Forest Conservation Easement on the south side of Jones Bridge Road at Howard Hughes Medical Center to accommodate the improvements on the west leg of Jones Bridge Road. But the Board denied the proposed improvements on the east leg of Jones Mill Road because the impacts to residents of Chevy Chase Park at the southeast corner (removal of an existing boundary wall and approximately 90 trees) were felt to be too great. SHA is proceeding with this project – including the improvements on the east leg of Jones Bridge Road - but the construction is not anticipated to begin until this fall.

Site Context and Background

The project would be constructed through North Chevy Chase Local Park and abut, but not significantly impact, adjacent single-family residential properties. One property with two single-family homes fronting on Jones Bridge Road abuts the project on the west. Abutting the project on the east are seven single-family homes, including one on the north side of Montrose Driveway. These homes are part of the Chevy Chase Valley community, consisting of 51 homes and the private Chevy Chase Recreational Association which includes the historic David Fairchild mansion. The Spring Ridge Drive/Jones Bridge Road intersection provides the principal ingress/egress to this community and is just east of the park.

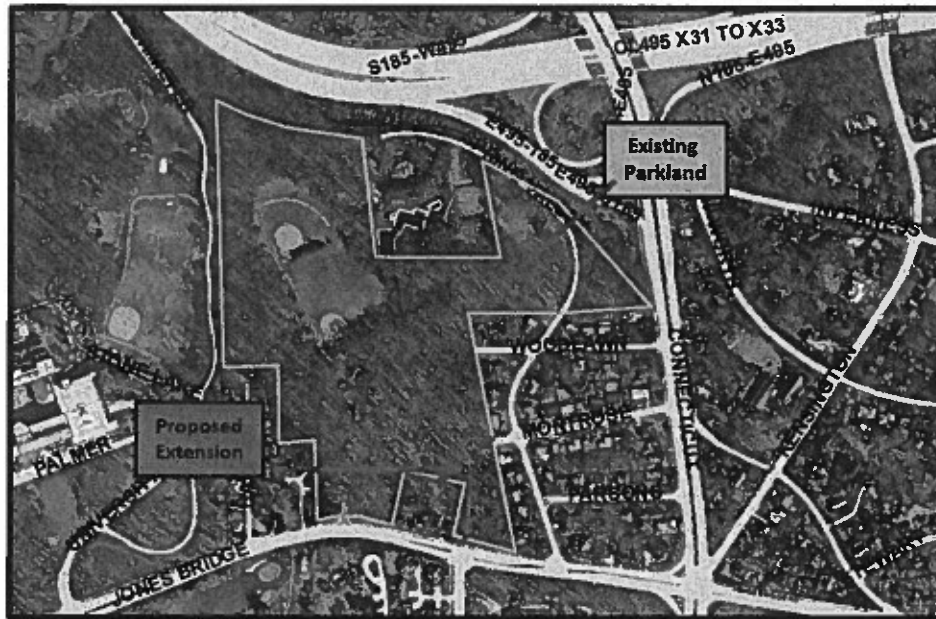
In accordance with the recommendations of the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission, Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC was moved in 2011 to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (NMMC), immediately west of North Chevy Chase Local Park. NMMC now serves as the headquarters for Joint Task Force National Capital Region/Medical – and is the core of an integrated tri-service, military medical facility serving the National Capital Region. As noted above, SHA will construct two intersection improvement projects at the Jones Bridge Road/Connecticut Avenue intersection, one block east of Spring Valley Road, to mitigate their forecast increase in traffic from the BRAC move.

Project Description

The proposed Platt Ridge Drive Extended would be built as a 483-foot-long, 20-foot-wide mostly open-section road that would be elevated as much as 13 feet above the existing ground level. The proposed site includes an existing drainage channel with drainage structures at either end. As part of this project, a pipe would be installed between these drainage structures and the significantly eroded channel would be regarded to create a bioswale to manage stormwater.

The southern end of the project is at the existing intersection of Jones Bridge Road and Platt Ridge Road, which primarily serves as the access to Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) on the south side of Jones Bridge Road. Directly opposite Platt Ridge Drive is the southeast corner of North Chevy Chase Local Park. (See map below.) The proposed road would extend north from the intersection, passing beside the homes on the west side of Spring Valley Road. The northern end of the project would tie into the existing terminus of Montrose Driveway, which has one additional house on the north side that fronts on Spring Valley Road.

The median on the west leg of Jones Bridge Road at Platt Ridge Drive would be removed to create a left turn bay to access the new road from eastbound Jones Bridge Road. The Jones Bridge Road curbs to be built by SHA would remain in place so there would be no additional impact on private property.



Master Plan Consistency

The 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan recommends that the access problems associated with the Spring Valley Road/Jones Bridge Road intersection be addressed, however no extension of Platt Ridge Drive is recommended in this plan. We believe that the installation of the traffic signal is sufficient to fulfill the master plan's recommendation for better access to the Chevy Chase Valley neighborhood. Whereas the roadway extension does not have such master plan support, it would provide better neighborhood access during peak hours. Conversion of the Spring Valley Road intersection to right-in/right-out only would meet the goal of facilitating smoother traffic flow.

Preservation of parkland and woodlands are also noted as objectives of the master plan. The construction of the proposed road would require the removal of forested parkland and would be inconsistent with those objectives.

Additional analysis

Transportation

Access

Ingress into the neighborhood is currently provided only from Jones Bridge Road via Spring Valley Road, which would become a right-in/right-out operation with the proposed elimination of the traffic signal at this intersection and closure of the median opening on Jones Bridge Road. The proposed new road would provide the primary ingress into the Chevy Chase Valley neighborhood for people traveling east on Jones Bridge Road; Spring Valley Road would continue to be the primary ingress from westbound Jones Bridge Road.

Ingress into the neighborhood was previously also provided directly from Connecticut Avenue via Woodlawn Drive, Montrose Driveway, and Parsons Road, but that access was removed by SHA in

response to a request by residents to reconfigure the intersections to prohibit turns into the neighborhood; that work was completed last year. Egress from the neighborhood is still permitted to southbound Connecticut Avenue at these three streets.

Egress from the neighborhood to Jones Bridge Road is currently provided by the traffic signal at Spring Valley Road; access to Connecticut Avenue in both directions is provided via eastbound Jones Bridge Road. The future primary egress from the neighborhood to Jones Bridge Road in both directions and to northbound Connecticut Avenue would be via Platt Ridge Drive Extended.

Safety

On September 16, 2010, MCDOT presented a concept for this project to the Planning Board and promoted the new road as the long-term solution for safe access to the Chevy Chase Valley community, with the expectation that the "interim" traffic signal at Spring Valley Road/Jones Bridge Road would prove to be unsafe. The Planning Board agreed to allow the study to proceed on that safety basis even though the new road is not in the master plan and would be constructed on parkland. The impacts of such road construction had not yet been identified and the expectation was that when MCDOT returned for approval of the project, those impacts and the safety experience of the "interim" signal would be detailed. Indeed, following up on an October 4, 2010 public meeting attended by Planning, MCDOT, and SHA staff, the Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association wrote in their letter of November 15, 2010, *"It is our hope that once the light is installed, the actual operation of the intersection would disprove the assertions that the signal would inadvertently cause more harm than good."*

As noted in the above Summary, recent traffic data provided by MCDOT show that the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) has increased from 18,240 in 2008 to 23,580, a 23% increase (see Attachment 2). But while the number of crashes increased slightly, the large increase in traffic meant that the crash rate declined even with the Spring Valley Road traffic signal. The small reduction in crash rates is statistically insignificant, but helps demonstrate that the interim traffic signal at Spring Valley Road has not been shown to cause a safety problem.

Capacity/Efficiency

While the project was initiated to address an expected safety problem, this effort is now focused more on standard engineering practice concerns with close spacing of intersections including queuing through the Spring Valley Road intersection. While the queuing problem through this intersection would be reduced by means of SHA's Phase 3 improvements to the Jones Bridge Road/Connecticut Avenue intersection, these improvements are not a panacea. Backups for eastbound traffic on Jones Bridge Road in the afternoon peak period currently extend about a half-mile past Platt Ridge Road, as confirmed by SHA staff in a recent meeting.

SHA's improvements to the Jones Bridge Road/Connecticut Avenue intersection were intended to ensure that the traffic congestion after the BRAC move of Walter Reed Hospital to the National Military Medical Center (NMMC) was no worse than it was prior to the move. While the objective was also to get these improvements done prior to the move, that did not occur. The Phase 3 improvements of the Jones Bridge Road/Connecticut Avenue project have not yet been advertised even though the BRAC move was completed in 2011.

We agree that the intersection spacing with the additional traffic signal at Spring Valley Road is less than guidelines call for and would work better in terms of the vehicular operations of the roadway without it.

As the updated traffic information from MCDOT shows, traffic volumes have increased since the BRAC move, but SHA's Phase 3 improvements - now scheduled to start construction later this year - will add a third eastbound left turn lane on Jones Bridge Road at Connecticut Avenue, reducing the length of the peak-hour period when the traffic queue extends through the Spring Valley Road intersection.

Priorities and Funding

This project is in the County Executive's Recommended Capital Improvements Program (CIP) with an estimated cost of \$3.7M for a 483-foot-long 20-foot-wide road, about \$7,551 per linear foot. This is actually more expensive on a linear foot basis than the master plan alternative for M-83, a four-lane divided roadway, which is estimated at \$350M for a 12.2-mile road, or about \$5,433 per linear foot. The cost for the Platt Ridge Drive Extended project however does not include right-of-way.

While we agree that this project would provide easier access during peak hours for Chevy Chase Valley residents and could improve operations on Jones Bridge Road, this is a very costly project whose benefits would likely not compare favorably to other competing projects in the CIP.

Design

Since this proposed new road is not in the master plan, it has not been classified. MCDOT's position is that since the 51 homes in Chevy Chase Valley is less than the 75-home maximum specified in the Subdivision Ordinance that can be adequately served by a tertiary street. But this gives little consideration to the additional traffic load that is generated by the Chevy Chase Recreational Association (CCRA) - which includes swimming pools, tennis courts and a nursery school/daycare among its facilities - for which it serves as the primary point of access. Also, a Primary street is normally the lowest classification street that is built as a CIP project without being partially funded by the community to be benefited.

Horizontal Alignment: The revised alignment of Platt Ridge Drive Extended is proposed to have back-to-back horizontal curves with 135-foot and 400-foot radii, which is a significant improvement over the one discussed at the April 3rd hearing. The proposed curves cause less of a concern than the originally proposed 100-foot and 500-foot curves because the degree of curvature is less on the smaller radius and the difference between the two - which governs how quickly drivers must correct their steering - is smaller.

The revised design is adequate for a tertiary street, but is far less than required for a primary street, which requires a 300-foot radius minimum, as well as a tangent (a straight length of roadway) at least 100 feet long between two reverse curves. It is also less than required for a secondary street, which requires a 150-foot radius minimum without a tangent between the curves. The proposed road is therefore sufficient to meet only the standard for a tertiary road.

The ability to improve the design further however has been constrained by MCDOT's decision to confine the footprint of the roadway to parkland as a base condition, rather than to design the road that we need and to determine whether or not the impacts on private property are acceptable.

The proposed horizontal alignment less than desirable to serve as the primary access to the Chevy Chase Valley community and the Chevy Chase Recreational Association clubhouse and facilities. MCDOT should consider making further revisions to meet at least secondary road standards, revisions that would likely impact only the rear portion of one adjacent residential lot.

Vertical Alignment: The maximum proposed grade of the proposed road has been reduced from 10.75 percent to 10 percent, and the grade would decrease as northbound drivers head into the proposed 135-foot radius horizontal curve. Therefore, our concern about the combination of the horizontal alignment and downslope is significantly reduced.

Bike and Pedestrian Accommodation

Bicyclists and pedestrians would not be accommodated on the proposed road, which is intended to bring vehicles to a signalized intersection and for which the minimum roadway width is proposed to reduce impacts to parkland. We concur with keeping the typical section as small as possible through parkland and that there is no reason to provide additional bike or pedestrian accommodation since there are no additional destinations on this short road.

The Platt Ridge Drive intersection is where the shared use path that MCDOT constructed on the north side of Jones Bridge Road a couple of years ago will switch to the south side of the road when SHA constructs their Phase 3 intersection project. The current design crosses the path on the east leg of the intersection but with no median pedestrian refuge and with only a single handicap ramp in the southeast corner. We recommend that MCDOT work with SHA to ensure that a safe crossing is provided that adequately accommodates bicyclists, a crossing that includes a median refuge on Jones Bridge Road as well as dual directional handicap ramps at the southeast corner; both ramps on the east leg should be constructed to be eight feet wide.

Parks

Background

North Chevy Chase Local Park serves the Bethesda/Chevy Chase area. It is located south of Interstate 495, west of MD Route 185 (Connecticut Avenue), east of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and north of Jones Bridge Road. The park is approximately 31 acres in size and includes a park activity building, two tennis courts, a full basketball/multi-use court, playground, three athletic fields, and parking area. The three athletic fields include two diamonds and a rectangular overlay. One of the diamonds serves as the home field for Bethesda Little League.

Unimproved areas of the park are covered with relatively high quality, mature, mixed deciduous forest. Because of its structural complexity and maturity, the forest supports a wide variety of wildlife species and offers significant aesthetic appeal. The forest also provides significant air quality and stormwater management benefits.

The 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan noted that the park acreage per person in the planning area is low compared to other planning areas and that these parks provide "relief from concrete and asphalt." The plan also notes that the sense of openness and beauty of the area is enhanced by the presence of "wooded vacant developable land" in parks. Preservation of woodlands is also noted as an environmental objective.

Mitigation/Compensation for Proposed Impacts on North Chevy Chase Local Park

A separate memo to be discussed at this Board session will be provided by Parks staff on the specific impacts to North Chevy Chase Local Park and on the disposition of park property.

According to language in the Platt Ridge Drive Extended Project Description Form (PDF) in the CIP, M-NCPPC is expected to dedicate the right-of-way for the project, or it will be purchased by Montgomery County using ALARF funds.

Since this project is not a master planned road, dedication of parkland for the roadway right-of-way at no cost is not appropriate. A no-cost land transfer would set a bad precedent by making road projects through parkland far cheaper than alternatives outside of parks. Any land exchange or sale of parkland for this project would require approval of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (Montgomery County and Prince George's County Planning Boards).

As MCDOT stated at the April 3rd hearing, they do not include right-of-way costs in the PDF for projects when only one or two landowners are impacted, so as not to give the owners any edge in negotiations. M-NCPPC is the only landowner affected by this project in any significant way however, so this concern should not apply. In addition, replacing parkland is likely to be a significant proportion of the project cost and not showing it in this PDF substantially understates the true cost of this project.

As general background information on parkland impacts, we note that the United States Department of Transportation Act (DOT Act) of 1966 included a special provision - Section 4(f) - which stipulated that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other DOT agencies cannot approve the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historical sites unless the following conditions apply:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land.
- The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from use.

The design of the proposed roadway however is in large part the result of MCDOT trying to keep impacts of the road limited to park property rather than avoiding park property. We recommend that the Board consider what potential precedents could be set in the approval of this non-master planned project on park property, the land transfer, and the parkland mitigation

Adequate mitigation for parkland impacts needs to be required not just to keep the park system whole, but also to discourage parkland from being seen as an easy choice to resolve transportation problems or as a land bank for future County transportation projects. Until the DOT Act of 1966, as discussed above, this was the predominant view of transportation agencies when freeways were frequently run through parkland because it was "empty land". The fact that this is a County project that does not have federal funding and is therefore not subject to this law should not be seen as a reason to flout its intent. While the property in question is titled to M-NCPPC, much of the land that has been added to the park system in recent years is titled to Montgomery County and thus a transfer from parkland to public right-of-way would be easier, increasing our concern.

In addition to clarifying in its comments the reason for approval of the project - to ensure permanent adequate access for the Chevy Chase Valley community and to improve safety along Jones Bridge Road - we recommend that the Board consider the need to discourage the future targeting of park property as the site for non-master plan transportation projects when determining the parkland mitigation package.

Conclusion

The Platt Ridge Drive Extended project was intended as a backup solution should the “interim” traffic signal at Spring Valley Road not work safely, but there is no documented safety problem with that signal. The conversion of the Spring Valley Road intersection to right-in/right-out only in conjunction with construction of the proposed Platt Ridge Drive Extended however would provide easier access for Chevy Chase Valley residents during peak hours, eliminate some types of potential crashes on Jones Bridge Road, and possibly improve traffic operations.

The proposed alignment of Platt Ridge Drive Extended is less than desirable and would benefit from additional changes in the horizontal alignment, but does not pose a significant safety concern.

The reasons for any agreement on the transfer of parkland for non-transportation projects should be clearly outlined to avoid setting any undesirable precedents and the parkland mitigation package should consider both the need to keep the park system whole, as well as discouraging its being seen as a potential land bank for future non-master plan transportation projects.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Platt Ridge Drive Forest Conservation Law Requirements
2. Traffic Volumes, Queuing, and Crash Rates on Jones Bridge Road



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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Larry Cole, Master Planner, Functional Planning and Policy
FROM: Tina Schneider, Senior Planner, Area 1 *Tina Schneider*
DATE: June 25, 2014
SUBJECT: Platt Ridge Drive Forest Conservation Law Requirements

ENVIRONMENT

Forest Conservation Law

On April 3rd, 2014, a Forest Conservation Plan (MR2014012) was presented to the Planning Board for the clearing of 1.35 acres of forest by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). Staff recommended denial of the plan based on noncompliance with Section 22A-9, County Highway Projects; Section 22A-12(b)(1) & (2), Retention. At the time of the Board hearing the County Arborist had not had sufficient time to review the FCP and provide "a written recommendation" as required under Section 22A-21(c).

Subsequent to the April 3rd, 2014 hearing, the Applicant submitted a Forest Conservation Exemption on May 27, 2014, under Chapter 22A-5(e) "a State or County highway construction activity that is subject to Section 5-103 of the Natural Resources Article of the Maryland Code, or Section 22A-9". The Exemption no longer requires the submittal of a Forest Conservation Plan. Instead, MCDOT must submit a Tree Save Plan and provide mitigation for specimen tree loss.

A Tree Save/ 22A-9 Compliance Plan was submitted on June 16, 2014 identifying tree protection and root pruning measures, offsite forest bank mitigation, and mitigation for the loss of specimen trees. The plan indicates a total forest clearing of 0.93 acres with a mitigation requirement of 0.93 acres. In addition, mitigation for the proposed removal of 718 inches of specimen tree caliper loss will occur at a 1:4 inch ratio. Therefore, the tree planting replacement requirement is 180-inch caliper with a minimum size planting of 3-inch trees which must result in the planting of 60 hardwood native 3-inch canopy cover trees.

Description

The Applicant has made efforts to minimize forest clearing by reducing the size and type of stormwater management facility proposed. Instead of a large open bioretention facility to the

north of the road, the stormwater treatment will now be linear bioswales, and located to the east of the road where impacts were have already proposed. This will reduce the forest clearing from 1.35 acres to 0.93 acres.

Modification to minimize forest impacts under Section 22A-9(a)(2)- County Highway Projects, have been taken to “minimize forest cutting or clearing and loss of specimen or champion trees to the extent possible”. In addition, other relevant Forest Conservation Law requirements have been applied:

- **Section 22A-9(b)**
Under Section 22A-9(b) the “constructing agency must reforest a suitable area at the rate of one acre of reforestation for each acre of forest cleared”. The Applicant will be removing 0.93 acres of forest and reforesting 0.93 acres of forest offsite.
- **Section 22A-9(c)**
Section 22A-9(c) requires meeting reforestation requirements under 22A-12(e) (Standards for reforestation and afforestation) which are proposed as offsite mitigation.
- **Section 22A-12**
Section 22A-12(e): Standards for reforestation and afforestation;
Section 22A-12(e): In lieu fee.
Section 22A-12 (h): (h) Agreements.
All requirements pertaining to the above law are being met.

Stormwater Management


A Stormwater Management preliminary concept plan has not been approved by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS). DPS has however provided a verbal statement on July 2, 2014, that the proposed concept will likely work provided the grades of the swales can be addressed.

Attachment 2

MEMORANDUM

June 6, 2014

TO: Bruce Johnston, Chief
Division of Transportation Engineering

FROM: Fred Lees, Chief 
Traffic Engineering Studies Section

RE: Traffic Volumes, Queuing, and Crash Rates on Jones Bridge Road

This memorandum is to address several requests raised in the April 14, 2014 letter from Montgomery County Planning Board Chair, Françoise M. Carrier to Arthur Holmes, Director of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation regarding traffic related issues associated with the proposed Platt Ridge Drive Extension project. Responses are outlined below:

- *The Board requests that MCDOT provide additional traffic data so that the safety experience along Jones Bridge Road since the installation of the signal, including any changes associated with the BRAC move to Bethesda, can be better assessed.*

Attached to this memo are a 12-hour turning movement count (TMC) at Jones Bridge Road and Spring Valley Drive, and a 48-hour tube count (TC) along Jones Bridge Road between Spring Valley Drive and Connecticut Avenue. The TMC was conducted on 4/23/14. The TC was conducted on 4/23-24/14.

Notable findings from the TC include:

- 1) ADT –The last count SHA conducted was in 2008 at which time the ADT was calculated to be 18,240. Since then SHA had been calculating new ADT's on an annual basis using a regional growth factor that did not reflect the impact of BRAC on the immediate vicinity. The SHA "grown" ADT for 2012 was 18,254.

The 24-hour volume of 26,198 when adjusted for month and day of week indicates a **current ADT of approximately 23,580, an increase of 29%**. Clearly, the SHA estimates failed to reflect actual conditions. Because we do not have annual counts we cannot know whether the 30% growth in ADT from 18,240 to 23,580 was relatively linear or in a series of distinct spikes.

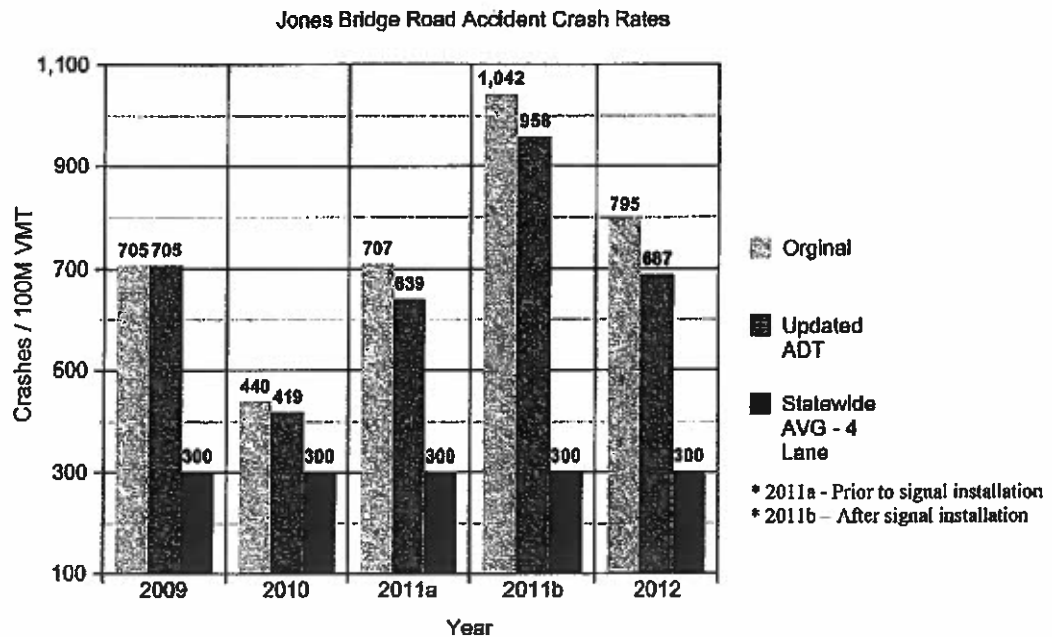
- 2) Expanded Peak Hour – although there may be one hour when the demand to travel is heaviest along Jones Bridge Road, because the traffic signal at Connecticut Avenue regulates how much traffic can move along Jones Bridge Road during any one hour, there is no individual hour where the volume is significantly higher. Rather, traffic volumes along EB Jones Bridge Road peak out and are steady at or near capacity from 2pm to 6pm.

- *The expected improvement in traffic conditions should be clearly documented and reconciled with current and forecast traffic conditions.*

SHA modeling previously provided showed significant reductions in delays along Jones Bridge Road with all of the improvements at this location. This modeling was done using volumes generated from older counts that did not reflect dramatic increases in traffic as a result of BRAC. New modeling has not been conducted, but it may be reasonably conferred that average delays will be even worse based on the most recent counts and that impacts will continue to begin earlier and stretch later.

Beyond the reduction in delays, by providing primary access for the community and allowing the closure of the median at Spring Valley Drive, the Platt Ridge Road project will address all of the safety/operational concerns at Spring Valley Drive previously outlined in our March 25, 2014 correspondence, copied as follows for reference:

- At present, residents turning left from Spring Valley onto Jones Bridge Road traverse four lanes of traffic, two in each direction. Eastbound Jones Bridge Road widens east of the intersection.
- After completion of the State's improvements this same traffic, turning left onto the main road, will have to traverse two westbound lanes and weave through four eastbound traffic lanes without any separate lane to pull into, in order to make a right turn onto Connecticut Avenue from a fifth eastbound lane at the intersection. If traffic is queued from Connecticut Avenue, it is very likely that some left turning traffic from the community will be caught stopped in the main line through lanes thus creating a potential for collisions that needs to be avoided.
- Crosswalks are often blocked forcing pedestrians to either walk between queued vehicles or in the travel lanes.
- Motorists tend to take unwise and aggressive chances when attempting to squeeze through the intersection (in this case at Spring Valley) when a queue is blocking them.
- Closely spaced signalized intersections increase the potential for some types of collisions. Because the signals at Spring Valley Road and Connecticut Avenue are so close, motorists often focus on the far signal's indications instead of the nearer one sometimes running the near signal's red indication. Anecdotal reports from the neighborhood indicate this is occurring in the EB direction as motorists try to "make" the signal at Connecticut.
- This section of Jones Bridge Road has historically had a significantly higher crash rate than the state-wide average for similar type roadways. As shown on the graph below, when adjusted for the increase in BRAC traffic, the crash rate for 100M VMT has not changed significantly and continues to be well above the average after the installation of the signal at Spring Valley Drive. The addition of conflict points (i.e., more lanes through the intersection in the proposed SHA intersection improvements) will also increase the potential for crashes.



Limits- Platt Ridge Drive to MD 185

- Motorists coming from the north and from I-495 and turning west onto Jones Bridge Road now have their own lane to facilitate this movement and may not be anticipating having to stop almost immediately after they turn at Spring Valley at a red signal increasing a potential for rear-end collisions.
- *Please provide calculations showing how much that longer queue (the current one mile peak hour queue) would be reduced.*

Traffic analysis software is used to calculate queue lengths. This software works well when volumes are below capacity and queues from one signal do not extend through an adjacent signal. Unfortunately that is the situation along Jones Bridge Road and there is no good way to calibrate the models to reflect the current up-to-a-mile queues with the existing volumes and lane configurations. Rather, the model generated a queue of 1,100'. What the models can do fairly well is calculate the queue lengths once the intersection improvements are made and it is operating under capacity. Therefore, the "after" queue length of 750' should be fairly accurate. If so inclined, one could calculate the difference between the current queue length of 5,280' and the projected length of 750' by subtraction and assume the reduction would be approximately 4,500'.



MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 2, 2014

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director, Administration *MR*
 Dr. John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) *J. Hench*

FROM: Brooke Farquhar, Park and Trail Planning Supervisor, (PPSD) *Brooke Farquhar*
 Dominic Quattrocchi, Park Planner Coordinator, (PPSD)

SUBJECT: Disposition of Land Item Pertaining to Platt Ridge Drive Extended: Mandatory Referral No. MR2014012

Recommended Action:

The Department of Parks recommends **APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS** of the disposition of approximately 2 acres of parkland at North Chevy Chase Local Park -- assuming the Planning Board determines there is a public need for the Platt Ridge Drive Extended project. This recommendation is based on MCDOT's design changes to the road that reduce environmental impacts to the park, and MCDOT's "good faith" commitment to mitigate impacts to North Chevy Chase Local Park through the acquisition of replacement parkland.

Recommended Conditions for Disposition of Parkland

1. MCDOT shall commit, through a formal written agreement with M-NCPPC, to acquire replacement parkland as outlined in options 1, 2, or 3 below for impacts of the Platt Ridge Drive Extended project on North Chevy Chase Local Park.
2. MCDOT shall perform non-native invasive plant species removal in the remaining forested area at North Chevy Chase Local Park. This work should be coordinated with the M-NCPPC Department of Parks Forest Ecologist. The work will encompass approximately 20 acres and span 2 growing seasons. Park Staff estimate the cost of this work to be approximately \$113,000.
3. For the proposed bioswale, MCDOT shall:
 - a. Design the bioswale and roadside swale slopes with channel stabilization methods to be non-erosive;
 - b. Stabilize the graded 2:1 side slope with low maintenance ground cover;
 - c. Incorporate underdrains incorporated into the media
 - d. Provide an access path from the road to the bioswales to facilitate future maintenance.

4. The Commission shall not provide title to the North Chevy Chase Local Park property needed for the Platt Ridge Drive Extended project until such time as the Commission has received the deed for the replacement parkland.

Background

Guiding Policy

The Planning Board-approved [2012 Park Recreation and Open Space \(PROS\) Plan](#) (and more specifically the Policy for Parks therein) provides guidance under which the Park Commission may allow non-park uses of parkland:

Lands and facilities under the control of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission are held as a public trust for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations. The Commission is pledged to protect these holdings from encroachment that would threaten their use as parkland. The Commission recognizes that under rare circumstances non-park uses may be required on park property in order to serve the greater public interest. (2012 Park Recreation and Open Space Plan, M-NCPPC, 2012: pp 18).

Past Planning Board decisions for non-park uses of parkland have been based on the following hierarchy of action:

1. Avoid the impact
2. If avoidance is not achievable, minimize the impact
3. If minimizing the impact is not enough, mitigate the impact
4. If mitigation is not possible, consider compensation.

In this case, if the Planning Board determines there is adequate public need for the road through the park, and recommends approval of the project, avoidance will not be an option. The following combination of minimization and mitigation proposed by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is considered acceptable to the Department of Parks:

1. Minimization of the project impacts through engineering and infrastructure relocation.
2. Mitigation through parkland replacement.

Park Description

North Chevy Chase Local Park serves the Bethesda/Chevy Chase area. It is located south of Interstate 495, west of MD Route 185 (Connecticut Avenue), east of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and north of Jones Bridge Road. The park is approximately 31 acres in size and includes a park activity building, two tennis courts, a full basketball/multi-use court, playground, three athletic fields, and parking area. The three athletic fields include two diamonds and a rectangular overlay. One of the diamonds serves as the home field for Bethesda Little League. Unimproved areas of the park are covered with relatively high quality, mature, mixed deciduous forest. The forest supports a wide variety of wildlife species, offers significant aesthetic appeal, and provides significant air quality and stormwater management benefits.

The 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan noted that the park acreage per person in the planning area is low compared to other planning areas and that these parks provide "relief from concrete and asphalt." The plan also notes that the sense of openness and beauty of the area is enhanced by the presence of "wooded vacant developable land" in parks. Preservation of woodlands is also noted as an environmental objective. No extension of Platt Ridge Drive was recommended in this plan.

Anticipated Park Impacts

As proposed, the project would directly impact the southeast corner of North Chevy Chase Local Park. The proposed road alignment runs along a glen in the southeast corner of the park with an average grade from Jones Bridge Road to Montrose Drive of 10%. Because of topography, the project design relies heavily on retaining walls and engineered slopes.

The project would result in the loss of approximately 2 acres of parkland - all of which supports relatively high quality, mature forest. The 2 acres of proposed impact area includes 1.15 acres of physical land disturbance, 0.35 acres of expected additional forest dieback related to critical root zone and physical impacts to parkland forest, and 0.55 acres of impact associated with existing parkland that would be cut-off and isolated from the rest of the park by the road project. The project would result in the loss of approximately 17 specimen trees- mostly *Liriodendron tulipifera*. In addition to the road construction, the project will require relocating a sewer line and an intermittent drainage channel. Perhaps most significant, the project will convert 0.35 acres of down-county mature forest to impervious surface.

In addition to the road construction, the project plans are showing that the existing intermittent stream channel through this portion of property that currently has a very large head-cut at the existing outlet to be entirely piped by storm drain. Stormwater Management (SWM) for the impervious road surface is shown to be provided by a series of bioswales at the bottom of the 2:1 fill slope on the southeastern side of the proposed road. The design plans also show the existing aged 8" sewer line is being replaced with new pipe.

The Park Development Section recommends that the bioswale treatments have underdrains incorporated into the media and that an access path to the bioswales is provided from the road for future maintenance purposes. Additionally, the graded 2:1 side slope should be stabilized with low maintenance ground cover, and the bioswale and roadside swale slopes should be designed with channel stabilization methods to be non-erosive.

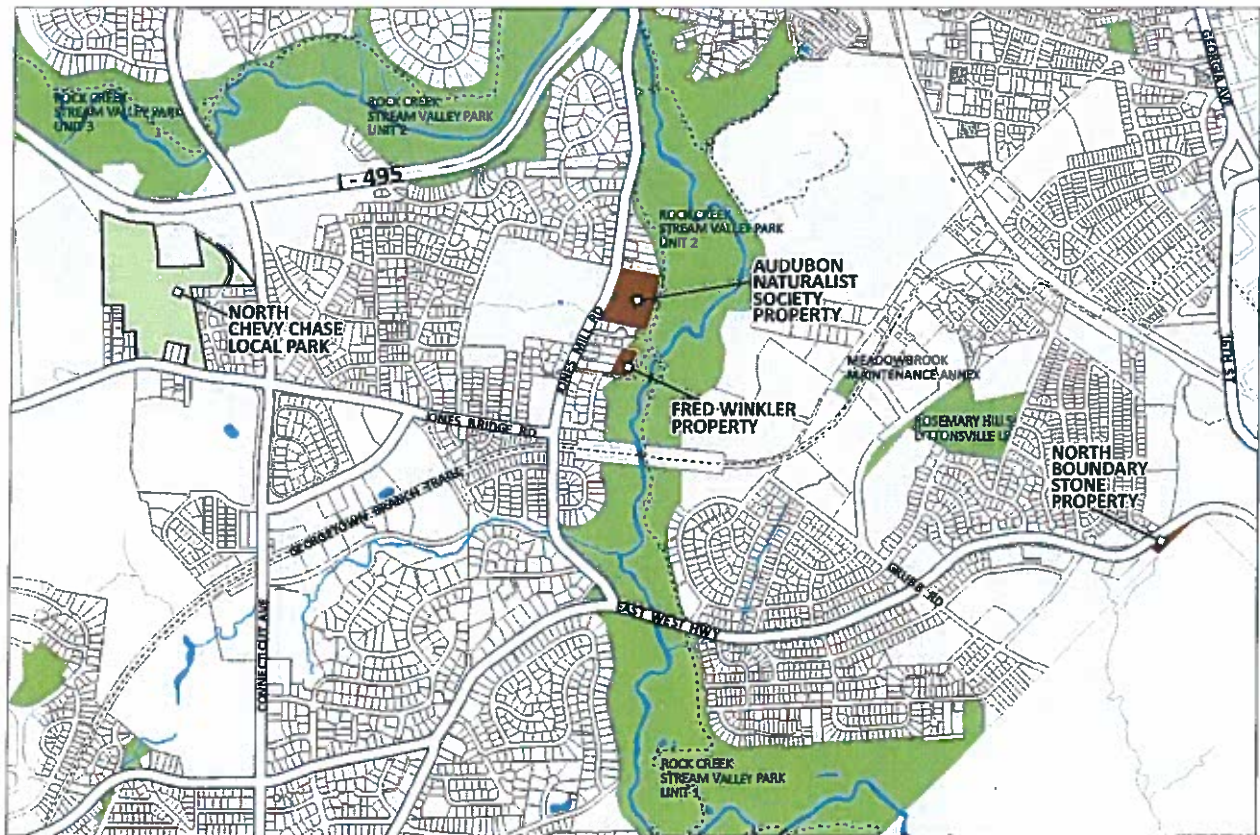


Figure 1 - Locator Map of North Chevy Chase Local Park in relation to Audubon Naturalist Society, Winkler and North Boundary Stone Properties

Mitigation/Compensation Recommendations

Guiding Criteria

In the event the Planning Board recommends approval of the disposition of the necessary land to facilitate the Platt Ridge Drive Extension project, the Department of Parks recommends that mitigation/compensation be based on the following criteria:

- Replacement land to be of equal or greater natural, recreational or cultural value than the parkland proposed to be taken; preferably at a ratio of at least 2:1;
- Replacement land to afford reasonable public access;
- Replacement land to contain mature forest;
- Replacement land preferably to be adjacent to an existing Local Park or Neighborhood Park in the same service area and watershed as the North Chevy Chase Local Park. If not, replacement land to significantly exceed resource value loss associated with North Chevy Chase Local Park impacts;
- MCDOT to deed to M-NCPPC the mitigation parkland prior to disposition of the park area at North Chevy Chase Local Park needed to facilitate the construction of Platt Ridge Drive extended; and,

- Non-native Invasive plant species removal of all remaining forested area at North Chevy Chase Local Park.

Mitigation Options

Mitigation through replacement land has been discussed by M-NCPPC and MCDOT. Three agreed upon options are being pursued in good faith by MCDOT staff, as outlined in the attached memo from MCDOT dated June 26, 2014, and summarized below. Staff recommends that we continue to work to arrive at an ultimately agreed upon mitigation package after the Board's review of the mandatory referral. To date, three options for parkland replacement have been discussed. (See *Figure 1*)

Option #1: Audubon Naturalist Society Parcel

Option #1 would be acquisition of the **Audubon Naturalist Society** parcel (Tax Account 00416781; District 07) located east of Jones Mill Road, jointly funded by MCDOT and M-NCPPC, consisting of approximately seven forested acres. The ratio of funding to be provided by each agency has not yet been determined. This parcel is adjacent to the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit 2 and is only 4,200 feet distant from the Project. (See *Figure 2*)

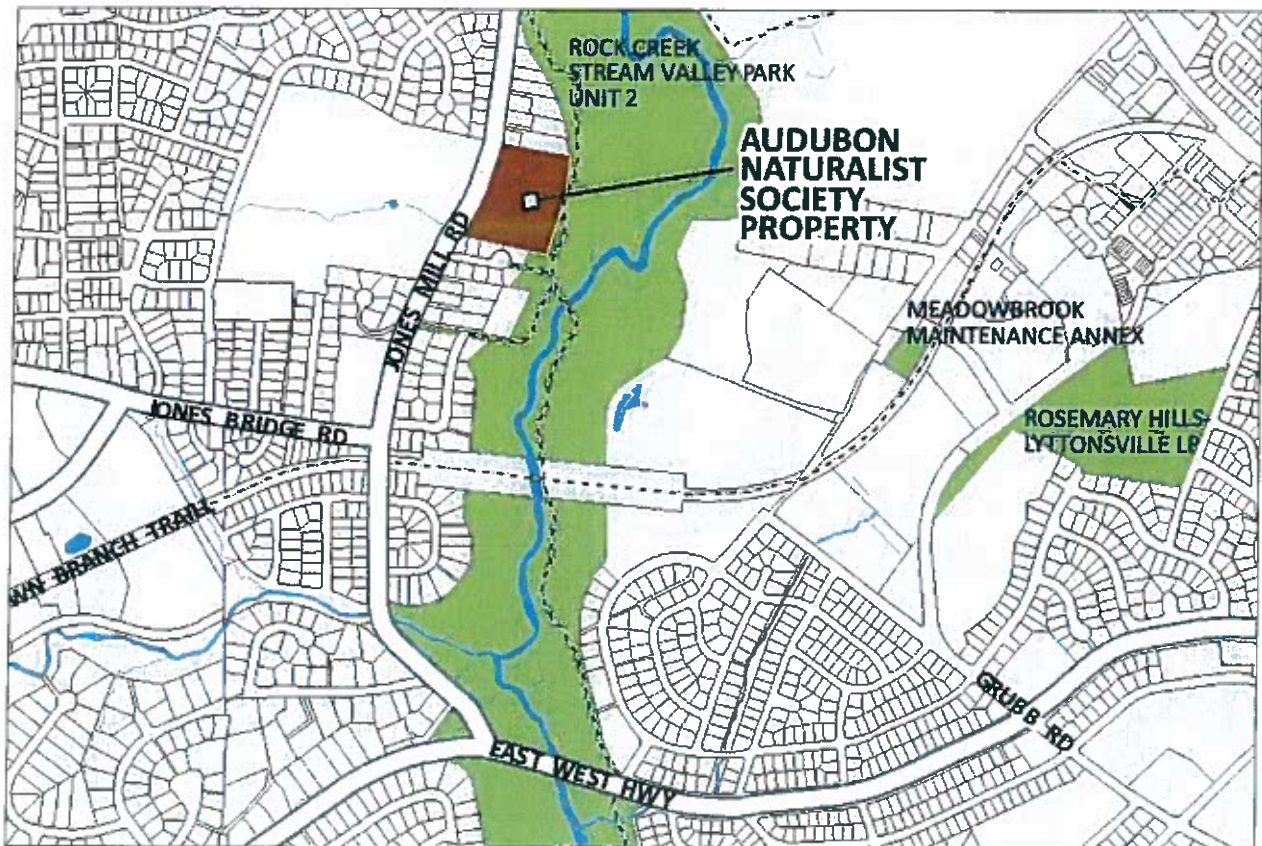


Figure 2- Option #1, Audubon Naturalist Society Parcel

Option #2: Fred Winkler and Boundary Stone North Properties

Option #2 would be acquisition of the following two properties totaling approximately 2.25 acres:

Property A - The Fred Winkler Property (Tax Account 00438572; District 07, Clean Drinking) which lies adjacent to Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit 2 and the historic Clean Drinking Spring. This property would provide a potential important visual buffer and extension to Rock Creek Park and the Rock Creek Park trail system. Additional benefits of acquisition include water quality and floodplain protection. This is another property proximate to North Chevy Chase Local Park and has been nominated for Legacy Open Space (LOS) designation and has M-NCPPC staff support. (See *Figure 3*)

Property B - The Boundary Stone North Property (Tax Account 00979913; District 13, Josephs Park) is a forested property largely encumbered by environmental buffer including floodplain and stream valley. The property has 548 linear feet frontage along East-West Highway, creating a well forested buffer along a heavily developed arterial road. The property is a Legacy Open Space (LOS) Appendix III Site formerly known as the Jolles Property. The LOS Advisory Group and staff support designation and acquisition. M-NCPPC and National Park Service staff conducted an evaluation of the Jolles Property in November 2010 and concluded that the property is an important Greenway Connection, merits considerable justification as Urban Open Space and is important to Cultural and Historic preservation associated with the adjacent Federal D.C. North Boundary Stone. Rock Creek National Park is directly adjacent to the south. (See *Figure 3*)

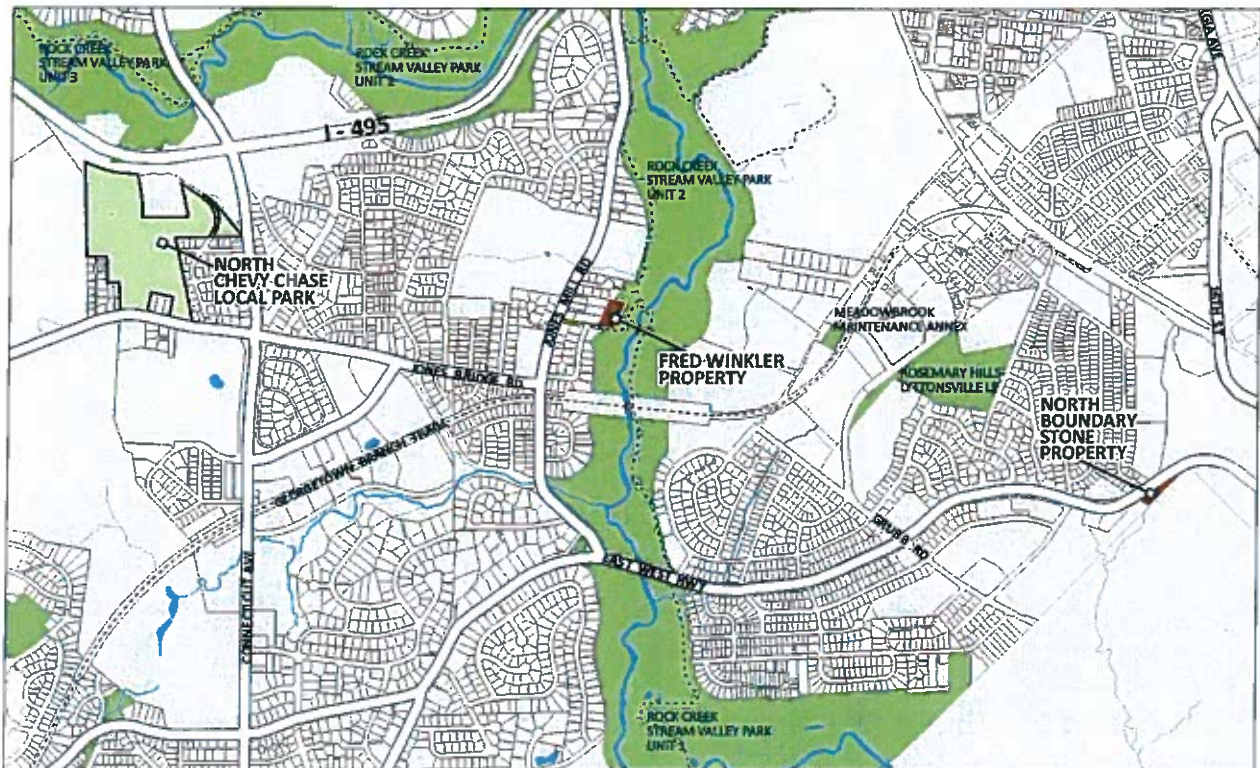


Figure 3 - Option#2, Fred Winkler and North Boundary Stone Properties

Option #3: State Highway Administration Ednor Road Parcel

Option #3 would be acquisition of the **SHA Ednor Road Parcel** consisting of approximately 15.9 acres located south of Ednor Road across from the Woodlawn Mansion and east of Norwood Road presently owned by the State of Maryland, State Highway Administration. (See

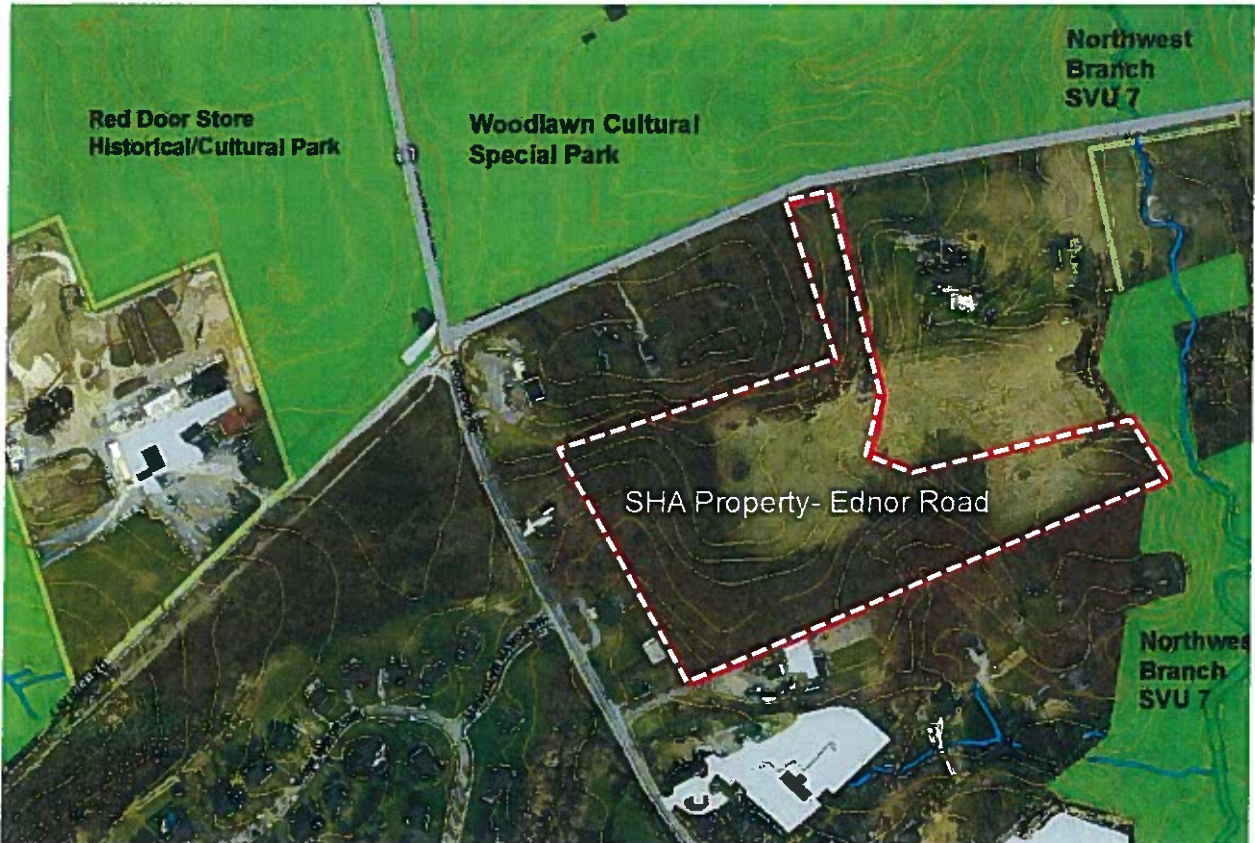


Figure 4)

Figure 4- Option #3: State Highway Administration, Ednor Road Property

Staff Recommended Mitigation Package

Although all three of MCDOT's mitigation scenarios are supported by Park Staff, Staff prefers Option #3, the SHA Ednor Road Property. The SHA property also includes eight acres of mature forest (encumbered by a Category 1 Forest Conservation Easement). M-NCPPC staff believes that this parcel, when assembled with several adjacent parcels, would provide an excellent opportunity to expand the bucolic park-like and historic setting of Woodlawn Manor Special Park and the Red Door Special Park. The SHA Property is also directly adjacent to Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. Staff believes the magnitude of these factors offsets concerns that the SHA Ednor Property is not within the same subwatershed or service area as North Chevy Chase Local Park. This parcel is currently being offered for sale as surplus property by the SHA. M-NCPPC staff has been considering acquisition of this parcel for some time but lacks appropriate funds. It is also important to note that acquisition of this property represents a 7:1 mitigation ratio.

In the event Staff's preferred option cannot be realized, Staff would recommend MCDOT pursue Option #2, the Fred Winkler property and the Boundary Stone property, followed by Option #1.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Letter from MCDOT Director Holmes to Chair Carrier, dated June 26, 2014

CC:

Mike Horrigan, Chief of Northern Region
Bill Tyler, Chief of Southern Region
Mitra Pedoeem, Chief, Park Development
Stephen Chandlee, Southern Regional Area Operations Manager, Southern Parks
Doug Ludwig, Acting Regional Area Operations Manager, Northern Parks
Antonio, DeVaul, Chief of Park Police
Bill Gries, Acquisition Specialist, Park Development
Brian Lewandowski, Engineer, Park Development

Attachment 1- Letter from MCDOT Director Holmes to Chair Carrier, dated June 26, 2014



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

June 26, 2014

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

Ms. Francoise M. Carrier, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Platt Ridge Drive Extended
CIP No. 501200
MR2014012

Dear Ms. Carrier,

In anticipation of our meeting with the Planning Board again on July 10th to discuss the Mandatory Referral for the Platt Ridge Drive Extended project, this letter is to provide you with an update of the status of our discussions with M-NCPPC Parks staff (Parks staff) regarding the Board's direction concerning Parkland Replacement Issues as specified in your April 14, 2014 letter.

Please be assured that if this project moves forward, MCDOT agrees to pursue acquisition of land to mitigate the parkland proposed to be taken, and is committed to continuing our discussions with M-NCPPC staff to identify an appropriate parcel. In that spirit, MCDOT staff has had several conversations with Parks staff culminating in a meeting on June 25, 2014 at which time several possible parkland replacement options were identified and endorsed by all in attendance as possible solutions to replacing the parkland impacted by the Project.

At our June 25, 2014 meeting, all agreed that the replacement should focus on meeting the following goals:

- The most important factor is for the replacement land to be of equal or greater natural, recreational, and cultural value to that of the parkland being lost.
- Afford reasonable public access;
- Preferably be mature forest; and
- Preferably be adjacent to an existing Local Park or Neighborhood Park in the same service area and watershed as the North Chevy Chase Local Park (NCCLP).

MCDOT also believes that along with those other characteristic, the financial value of the properties to be exchanged is an important factor that needs to be considered in the final transaction.

Office of the Director

101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-7170 • 240-777-7178 FAX
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Located one block west of the Rockville Metro Station

Francoise Carrier
June 26, 2014
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We also discussed and agreed that there may be some properties out of the service area which may be of significant value to M-NCPPC so as to outweigh the local service area requirement.

While not wanting to limit other opportunities where M-NCPPC and MCDOT might cooperate to obtain a replacement property that better suits M-NCPPC's needs, our combined staffs agreed that at this point in time any one of the following three options are worth pursuing as potential parkland replacement sites for the Project:

1. Jointly funded (ratio of funding by MCDOT and M-NCPPC is yet to be determined) acquisition of the **Audubon Naturalist Society** parcel (Tax Account 00416781; District 07) located east of Jones Mill Road, consisting of approximately 7 forested acres. This parcel is adjacent to the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit 2 and is only 4,200 feet distant from the Project.
2. Acquisition of BOTH the following properties which would total approximately 2.25 acres:
 - a. **The Fred Winkler Property** (Tax Account 00438572; District 07, Clean Drinking) which lies adjacent to Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Unit 2 and the historic Clean Drinking Spring. This property would provide a potential important visual buffer and extension to Rock Creek Park and the Rock Creek Park trail system. Additional benefits of acquisition include water quality and floodplain protection. This is another property proximate to NCCLP and has been nominated for Legacy Open Space (LOS) designation and has M-NCPPC staff support.
 - b. **The Boundary Stone North Property** (Tax Account 00979913; District 13, Josephs Park) is a forested property largely encumbered by environmental buffer including floodplain and stream valley. The property has 548 linear feet frontage along East-West Highway, creating a well forested buffer along a heavily developed arterial road. The property is a Legacy Open Space (LOS) Appendix III Site formerly known as the Jolles Property. The LOS Advisory Group and staff support designation and acquisition. M-NCPPC and National Park Service staff conducted an evaluation of the Jolles Property in November 2010 and concluded that the property meets LOS Criteria as an important Greenway Connection, merits considerable justification as Urban Open Space and for its importance to Cultural and Historic preservation associated with the adjacent Federal D.C. North Boundary Stone. Rock Creek National Park is directly adjacent to the south.
3. Acquisition of the **SHA Ednor Road Parcel** consisting of approximately 15.9 acres located south of Ednor Road across from the Woodlawn Mansion and east of Norwood Road presently owned by the State of Maryland, State Highway

Francoise Carrier

June 26, 2014

Page 3

Administration. This parcel is currently being offered for sale as surplus property by the SHA and could be acquired by MCDOT for transportation purposes on behalf of M-NCPPC. M-NCPPC staff has been considering acquisition of this parcel for some time but lack sufficient funds. M-NCPPC staff feels that this parcel is desirable because it supports approximately three acres of forest and would help to maintain - when combined with several adjacent parcels - the bucolic, park-based, open space setting that currently characterizes the intersection of Layhill Road and Norwood Road.


MCDOT would like to explore with the Board the concept of a "parkland bank" to be created when MCDOT acquires land in excess of a fair transaction that could be used by us for future projects. Parks staff is amenable to a similar concept but limited to compensation for forest areas. A similar "bank" process has been used with the State DNR and the Corps of Engineers when dealing with wetland replacement and mitigation. Obviously, any final decision is subject to appropriation from the County Council.

As suggested in your letter, the discussions between our staff members have resulted in several viable and reasonable possible solutions to the replacement of the impacted parkland. We agreed that Parks staff will review the three possible solutions and get back to us, or the Board, with their priority recommendations. Independent of a final solution, however, we at MCDOT look forward to our Mandatory Referral meeting with the Board on June 10th and to hearing the Board's guidance on these park replacement opportunities.

Please be advised that engineering revisions and traffic data have already been provided to your Transportation staff, consistent with your letter of April 14, 2014.

Thank you for your consideration of this project and if you have any questions, please feel free to call Edgar Gonzalez at 240-777-7185 or Bruce Johnston at 240-777-7236.

Sincerely,


Arthur Holmes Jr.
Director

Cc. Michael Riley
Edgar Gonzalez
Bruce Johnston



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

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

July 18, 2014

Mr. Arthur Holmes, Director
Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Executive Office Building (EOB)
101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20950

RE: Platt Ridge Drive Extended
CIP No. 501200
Mandatory Referral No. MR2014012

Dear Mr. ^{Art} Holmes:

At our regularly scheduled meeting on July 10, 2014, the Planning Board approved the Mandatory Referral of the above project with the following comments:

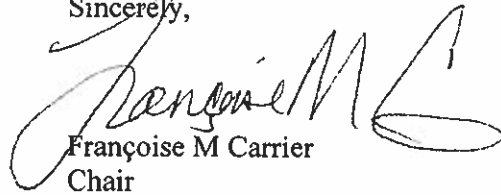
1. This project, incorporating changes recommended at the Planning Board's meeting on April 3, 2014, is approved to ensure permanent adequate access for the Chevy Chase Valley community and to improve safety along Jones Bridge Road.
2. While much improved over the previously submitted design, the horizontal alignment of the proposed road meets only the requirements of a tertiary road and is therefore less than desirable to serve as the primary access to the Chevy Chase Valley community and the Chevy Chase Recreational Association clubhouse and facilities. We recommend that you consider making further revisions to meet at least secondary road standards; these revisions would likely impact the rear portion of the adjacent private property fronting on Jones Bridge Road.
3. The cost to acquire any park and private property required to construct this road at a satisfactory horizontal and vertical alignment should be reflected in this project's PDF.
4. Non-native invasive species must be removed from the parkland to be transferred, as well as in the remaining forested area at North Chevy Chase Local Park.
5. For the proposed bioswale:
 - a. Design the bioswale and roadside swale slopes with channel stabilization methods to be non-erosive;

Mr. Arthur Holmes
July 18, 2014
Page Two

- b. Stabilize the graded 2:1 side slope with low maintenance ground cover;
- c. Incorporate underdrains into the media;
- d. Provide an access path from the road to the bioswales to facilitate future maintenance.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project and for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or comments concerning our review, feel free to contact me at 301-495-4605 or Larry Cole of our staff at 301-495-4528.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Françoise M Carrier', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Françoise M Carrier
Chair

cc: Robert Gonzales



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

February 25, 2016

Al R. Roshdiah
Director

William Gries
Montgomery County Department of Parks
9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

Re: Platt Ridge Drive Extended project
CIP#501200
ROW Exchange for Germantown Town Center Urban Park land

Dear Mr. Gries:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm our understanding regarding the transfer of the Germantown Town Center Urban Park property from the County to the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (the "Commission") as a means of satisfying the County's requirement to find replacement parkland for that portion of the North Chevy Chase Local Park that is being impacted by the County's Platt Ridge Drive Extended project.

As you know, the County has designed a road project to extend Platt Ridge Road from its current terminus at Jones Bridge Road through a portion of the North Chevy Chase Local Park and connecting to Montrose Driveway. The project, which will provide necessary access for the Spring Valley neighborhood to Jones Bridge Road, will impact approximately 1.5 acres within the North Chevy Chase Local Park.

During the Mandatory Referral process, the Commission suggested three possible options for replacement parkland. The County diligently pursued those options but was unable to acquire the desired property. By email dated August 13, 2015, you suggested that the County consider transferring its fee simple interest in approximately 4 acres of land located adjacent to the Germantown Library and upon which the Commission had constructed the Germantown Town Center Urban Park as a means of satisfying the requirements of Section 17-206 of the *Land Use Article*, which governs the Commission's land disposition actions.

In response to your suggestion, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Staff approached the Department of General Services, the controlling department for the Germantown land, regarding the transfer of the land to the Commission. We are pleased to report that the Department of General Services is agreeable to the land transfer. To date, we have had the property surveyed and are in the process of preparing a plat of the area to be transferred to the Commission.

Division of Transportation Engineering

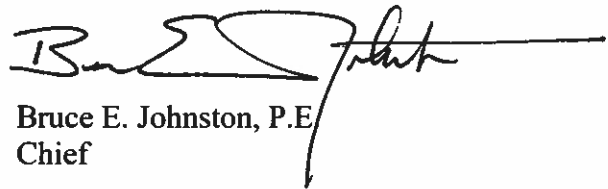
100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor • Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878 • 240-777-7220 • 240-777-7277
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Mr. Gries
February 25, 2016
Page 2

MCDOT believes that this proposed exchange benefits both the County and the Commission and we are recommending that the exchange be approved. Please note, however, that we will need to confer with the County Attorney's Office for advice on whether the subject transfer will need to go through the County's land disposition process (County Code Section 11B-45). Even if that is the case, it will be MCDOT's recommendation that the disposition be approved.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Bruce E. Johnston, P.E.
Chief

BEJ:gl

cc: Al R. Roshdiah
David Dise

Germantown Town Center UP



**Parkland Outlines
Status & Owner**
 M-NCPPC Parks
 Other Parks

1 inch = 200 feet



Map Compiled: 8/5/2015

Map Compiled by Land Acquisition Specialist
 Based on M-NCPPC GIS Layers
 For Planning Purposes Only

M-NCPPC 16-____

Approval of Exchange of Commission Real Estate with Montgomery County, Maryland
for Platt Ridge Drive Extended

Date of Hearing: July 20, 2016

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“Commission”) is authorized under the Maryland Code Ann., Land Use Article, §17-206(b) (“Land Use Article”) to exchange recreational land held by it for any other land held by other public body or agency, which the Commission determines to be more suitable for its statutory purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (“MCDOT”) proposes to construct a road improvement project known as Platt Ridge Drive Extended (“Project”) to alleviate traffic congestion in the vicinity of Chevy Chase Valley expected from the U.S. Department of Defense’s Base Realignment and Closure Plan (“BRAC”);

WHEREAS, the Commission holds certain real property interests in parkland known as North Chevy Chase Local Park (“Park”) which is recorded among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland in Liber 3388 at folio 604, and;

WHEREAS, MCDOT has communicated to the Commission’s Montgomery County Departments of Parks of MCDOT’s need for 1.50 acres, more or less, of the Park property to complete the Project; and

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2014 the Montgomery County Planning Board approved, with comments, MCDOT’s Mandatory Referral for the Project (Mandatory Referral No. MR2014012) which included the requirement that the County convey to the Commission acceptable replacement land for any parkland needed for the Project; and

WHEREAS, staff of the Montgomery Department of Parks on June 16, 2016 presented a report to the Montgomery County Planning Board describing the various properties MCDOT investigated for meeting the acceptable replacement requirement for the parkland needed for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the staff report contained a recommendation that the Montgomery County Planning Board accept as the replacement parkland, 4.55 acres, more or less, of land owned by the Montgomery County, Maryland, behind the Germantown Library as set forth in the staff report; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Board at its public meeting held on June 16, 2016 reviewed and approved the analysis concerning the exchange of Commission property with Montgomery County to accommodate MCDOT’s Platt Ridge Extended Project, subject to the Commission’s approval of the said exchange of Commission property.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, the Commission hereby adopts the findings of the Montgomery County Planning Board; accepts the Montgomery County Planning Board’s recommendation; and hereby approves the exchange of the Commission property interests with Montgomery County, conditioned on the Commission not providing title to the North Chevy Chase Local Park Property needed for the Project until the Commission has received from the County the fee simple deed to the exchange property.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in connection with the transaction contemplated herein, the Executive Director is authorized to execute and deliver, on behalf of the Commission, any and all such agreements, certificates, documents, and/or instruments, and to do or cause to be done, any and all such acts, as the Executive Director deems necessary or appropriate to make effective or to implement the intended purposes of the foregoing resolution, without limitation, and the taking of all such actions deemed conclusively to be authorized hereby.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution No. 16-____, adopted by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on motion of Commissioner - _____, seconded by Commissioner _____, with Commissioners _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ voting in favor of the motion at its regular meeting held on Wednesday, June 15, 2016 in Riverdale, Maryland.

Patricia Colihan Barney
Executive Director