



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901Agenda Item #11
MCPB 12/04

November 26, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Lester L. Straw, Superintendent of Parks
Michael F. Riley, Chief, Park Development Division
Douglas Alexander, Supervisor, Design and Project
Management, Park Development Division

FROM: Ellen Masciocchi, Planner Coordinator, Park Development
Division

SUBJECT: Olney Manor Skateboard Park Facility Plan

I STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Approve facility plan for skateboard park in Olney Manor Recreational Park
- Approve transmittal of revised Project Description Form (PDF) for construction funding for inclusion in the Planning Board's recommended FY05-10 CIP to County Executive and County Council
- Approve immediate start of design, construction documents, and permits phase utilizing FY04 CIP funds

II PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Introduction

On July 16, 2001, a report entitled "Roller Hockey, In-line Skating and Skateboarding Report" was presented to the Board for approval. The report was in response to several efforts to provide in-line skating rinks in the County, including relocating the rink at the Potomac Community Center. The report represented a comprehensive approach to identify and

define the different types of recreational skating activities, the types of facilities needed throughout the County, as well as specific locations for facilities. The report noted the need to continue to look for a skateboard park site in the Olney area.

The Planning Board reviewed the report and directed staff to include funding for a facility plan for a skateboard park in the Facility Planning-Non-Local PDF for FY03 for a site to be determined. These funds are currently being used for the Olney skateboard park facility plan.

During the past two years, there has been a growing grass roots movement in the Olney area for a skateboard park. In 2000, a high school student in the Olney area sent a petition requesting a skateboard park to the Chairman of the Planning Board. It contained 200 signatures. In the past year, a community advocacy group in Olney requesting a skateboard park, presented a petition with over 1,600 signatures to the County Council – see letter from Jimena Ryan dated January 14, 2003, Attachment #1.

On April 25, 2002, more than 50 Olney citizens supporting this recreational use attended a public meeting organized by a community member who led the advocacy for a skateboard park. Efforts to locate a suitable site in Olney were underway at the time, however a site in Olney had not been identified.

On April 3rd, 2003, staff brought an administrative item to the Board requesting approval to choose a site for the skateboard park within Olney Manor Recreational Park and to transmit a letter to the County Executive requesting that the Department of Recreation act as the operator for this facility. Approval was given for either of two sites within the park, one central and close to the ponds, which potentially affected the PEPCO right-of-way, or the other using a set of three existing tennis courts, with replacement tennis courts to be constructed nearby.

Olney Manor Recreational Park was chosen because it is a park designated for active recreational use, has an area large enough to house the skateboard park and has few neighbors in close proximity. Parking is distributed throughout the park and it contains rest rooms and water fountains. In addition, young people can walk to the park along the sidewalks on Georgia Avenue or be dropped off at the park. A bus stop is located on Georgia Avenue close to the entrance. The citizens requesting a skateboard park advocated locating the facility at Olney Manor Recreational Park.

Reference is also made to the need for a skateboard park in the Olney Master Plan Public Hearing Draft, Parks and Recreation Chapter.

B. Other Sites Considered in the Olney Area:

The Park Development and Countywide Staff looked at a variety of locations for a skateboard park in Olney, including some property owned by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) on Bowie Mill Road, an area behind the Olney Shopping Center, and the Greenwood, Longwood and Olney Square Local Parks. The MCPS site had a large area with wetlands and trees and had not been developed. Even though staff does not recommend placing skateboard parks in local parks, staff considered the three local parks, but eliminated them based on the proximity to neighbors. This activity can generate noise and would be problematic for adjacent neighbors to a local park. Staff looked at a variety of other properties that were privately owned such as the area behind the Olney Village Mart. The parking lot located at the back of the shopping center was identified as a potential site; however, it is scheduled for future development.

C. Sites within Olney Manor Recreational Park

A total of 8 sites were investigated within Olney Manor Recreational Park – see map attachment #2. An evaluation of all eight sites taken from the consultants report is included as Attachment #3. Based on the site selection criteria, staff reduced the sites to four for community input. Participants at the community meeting proposed an additional site, Site #5, the parking lot north of the swim center, which staff included in the final selection. The five sites are as follows:

- Site #1: The three tennis courts adjacent to the Maintenance Yard.
- Site #2: The volleyball/handball court area parallel to Georgia Avenue.
- Site #3: The open area north of softball field #3 and across from the swim center.
- Site #4: The earth mound between Georgia Avenue and the swim center.
- Site #5: The parking lot north of the swim center.

D. Community and Agency Outreach

On September 2, 2003, as part of the facility planning process, a public meeting was held in Olney where the public could comment on four potential sites within the park. Notice was sent to adjacent neighbors surrounding the park, as well as civic association presidents within a one-mile radius. Approximately ninety people attended the public meeting. Tennis players in attendance voiced opposition to Site #1, a bank of three tennis courts located next to the maintenance facility and Site #2, an area that currently has two volleyball courts and a handball court. The tennis

players stated that they use the handball court as a backboard to practice tennis and to find partners for pick up games. An additional comment was made that the proximity of either of these sites to tennis courts would be disruptive to tennis games – see letter from Charles Carter dated October 28, 2003, Attachment #4.

The fourth site was the mound between Georgia Avenue and the Olney Manor Indoor Swim Center. At the time the pool was constructed, The Commission deeded this property to the County. The mound could be graded down to form a platform for a skateboard park, leaving a berm to act as a buffer between the skateboard park and Georgia Avenue. This site later proved to be unacceptable to the Montgomery County Department of Recreation because of its potential impact on the outdoor deck facing Georgia Avenue outside the indoor pool.

At the meeting, two community members proposed a fifth site. One citizen mentioned the parking lot at the northern end of the park property close to Oakdale-Emory United Methodist Church. The other citizen proposed the parking lot north of the swim center. It was later determined that the parking lot at the northern end of the property is too narrow. Staff focused on the parking lot closest to the swim center, which is the current Site #5.

After the meeting, staff received a significant number of emails from tennis players stating their opposition to Site #1 (tennis courts) and site #2 (volleyball/handball courts). The Department of Recreation stated their preference for Site #3 (PEPCO right of way), with their second choice as Site #5 (parking lot nearest the swim center). At the public meeting, the South East Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCO) submitted testimony opposing Site #3 – see memorandum from John Lyons, dated September 2, 2003, Attachment #5. Staff at the Mid-County Services Center informed Park staff that the Greater Olney Civic Association endorsed Site #5 over Site #3. The Oakdale Emory United Methodist Church also does not favor site #3 – see letter from Martha Lipscomb dated November 4, 2003, Attachment #6.

Site #3 is located over the PEPCO right of way. On June 4, 2003, staff met with PEPCO and on October 15, 2003, staff transmitted plans for this site to PEPCO for review. PEPCO responded with a letter dated November 14, 2003, stating that due to plans for future extension of their circuits, it will not permit the skateboard park in the right-of-way – see letter from Vernon Gibson dated November 14, 2003, Attachment #7.

F. Recommended Skateboard Park Facility

Based on the site selection analysis and on the community and user group input, staff recommends location of the skateboard park in Olney Manor

Recreational Park in the parking lot north of the indoor swim center. On October 30, 2003, the Board reviewed the project in conjunction with the staff recommended FY 05-10 CIP and approved the Olney Manor Skateboard Facility PDF – see Attachment #8.

The advantages of the chosen site are that it: a) preserves the remaining open space in the parks, b) is located away from neighboring properties, c) provides ease of vehicular and pedestrian access, d) does not interfere with existing facilities, e) does not increase impervious surface area, and f) provides operational proximity with the swim center. The disadvantages include: a) usurps existing parking, and b) although close to the swim center, is fairly distant from the park restrooms building.

The recommended facility would consist of an asphalt area with a fence and gate. The parking lot will be modified to provide a drop-off and pedestrian access to the facility entrance. A building will be placed outside of the fence that would be large enough for two staff people and to store equipment. The skateboarding elements or equipment will be placed on top of the asphalt surface and often do not require any kind of attaching mechanism. This equipment is not like play equipment in that a separate installer would not be needed for the equipment. Most companies that sell the equipment install it themselves or they would provide a supervisor to instruct Commission crews on how to install the equipment and discount the installation price.

Use of the facility would be supervised at all times. No nighttime use is proposed at this time.

III OPERATIONAL ISSUES

The operation of a skateboard park is very different from a roller hockey rink similar to the one at Ridge Road Recreational Park. A roller hockey rink is used for team play and is permitted to leagues or used by groups of citizens interested in pick-up play and does not require supervision. A skateboard park requires on-site supervision to ensure that participants are paying the required fees, wearing protective equipment, and participating in a safe way. The operator would need to be present at all times to make sure proper safety procedures are being followed.

A. Operator

Several meetings were held with staff from the Department of Recreation. On October 28, 2002, a meeting was held with representatives from the Department of Recreation, and representatives from the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg as well as Risk Management for The Commission. The

purpose of the meeting was to gain insight from the two Cities into their skateboard park operations.

On February 14, 2003, Recreation Department, Park and Planning and County Council staff members met to discuss the Olney Manor site and the issue of who would operate the facility. Representatives from the City of Gaithersburg and Rockville's skateboard parks attended. The respective staffs agreed to move forward with the facility plan, and that an operator for the facility had to be identified. Staff recommended the Montgomery County Department of Recreation or their contractor act as the operator, since The Commission operates very few programs and is not structured to operate this type of facility. A private operator was also discussed, but rejected on the grounds that the facility would not be profitable. Most of the skateboard parks in the State of Maryland are operated by public agencies.

On April 10, 2003, staff transmitted a letter from the Chairman to the County Executive requesting the Montgomery County Department of Recreation act as operator. A response was received from the Director of the Montgomery County Recreation Department agreeing to operate the facility if funds were allocated to the agency for that purpose – see letter from Greg Bayor dated April 23, 2003, Attachment #9.

Additional meetings have been held with the Department of Recreation to discuss site related and operational issues. On November 21, 2003, operational and site issues were discussed in a meeting held with Greg Bayor, Director of the Department of Recreation, in which Mr. Bayor expressed the agency's support for the project.

B. Probable Operating Costs

Staff consulted with the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville as well as Park Managers to determine the cost of operating a skateboard park. Based on an analysis of the information gathered, staff has concluded that this type of facility would require a subsidy. The Department of Recreation has conducted an analysis of the probable operating costs and has concluded that a subsidy will likely be required. Based on the design and construction schedule, staff recommends opening the facility in FY06.

IV THE FACILITY PLAN PROCESS

During the facility planning process, community impacts were analyzed, a program of requirements was developed, other skateboard parks in neighboring jurisdictions were visited, a meeting was held with

skateboarders and a skateboard park company, and parking counts were taken.

A. Process

The creation of the facility plan included the following steps:

- Data collection
- A site visit was held with representatives from the community, a skateboard company, the Department of Recreation, Countywide Planning, the Consultant and the Park Manager to assess the 7 original sites within the park.
- Presentation of 4 possible sites to the community at a public meeting.
- Meetings with the Recreation Department staff to discuss the sites, operations, and budget issues.
- Development of two design concepts for two of the sites.
- A meeting held with skateboarders to assess what elements they would like to see included in a skateboard park.
- Development of a detailed plan for the selected site, based on comments from staff and the Department of Recreation.

B. Site Inventory and Analysis

Olney Manor Recreational Park was constructed in the mid-1970's as a park for active recreational use. It consists of a total of 62.8 acres and is located on the north side of Batchellors Forest Road, east of Georgia Avenue. The park is bounded by Emory Church Road to the north, Georgia Avenue to the west, and Batchellors Forest Road along the southern and western boundaries. It is a fully developed recreational park that includes an indoor swim center operated by the Department of Recreation, and the following recreational uses operated by the Parks Department: racquetball courts, a handball court, two volleyball courts, a picnic area, a small playground, a swing area, three softball fields, two baseball fields, Little League and regulation size, and 17 tennis courts. The property falls within the Olney Master Planning area.

C. Proposed Facility Plan

Concept plans were developed for two sites within the park, Site #5, the parking lot site, and Site #3, the open area located in the PEPCO right-of-way. The concept for the right-of-way site was rejected by PEPCO following their review. Staff proceeded to develop the facility plan for the site located in the parking lot on the northern side of the mound, adjacent to, and west of the indoor swim center – see Phoenix Engineering's Facility Plan Report, Attachment #12.

The program of requirements for the skateboard park includes the following:

- An asphalt area 90' x 160' covering an area of 14,400 square feet surrounded by 10' high chain link fence.
- A 15' x 15' building to house staff and equipment located to provide control at the entrance to the facility.
- A viewing area outside the fence.
- A vehicular drop off area.
- Pedestrian pathway access from adjacent parking, swim center building, and Georgia Avenue sidewalk.
- Skateboard elements purchased from a skateboarding company under a design/build contract. The company will install the skateboard elements.
- Restrooms within easy walking distance.
- Drop-off area and convenient parking.
- Security lighting (the facility will not be used at night).
- Landscaping and screening.

The current parking lot slopes from west to east, from Georgia Avenue to the open area by the storm water management ponds. The existing parking lot will have to be demolished and resurfaced to make the asphalt area level with only a 2% grade for drainage. The building will be located outside of the fenced area, at the entrance to the facility. It will house staff and equipment. A viewing area for non-participants will be provided outside of the fenced area on the west side.

The entire parking area north of the swim center and extending northward between the baseball field and edge of the park has a total of 215 parking spaces that are 10' wide and 20' deep. In the proposed concept, three bays of parking (64 spaces) and the landscape strip are eliminated to provide adequate space for the asphalt pad, pedestrian circulation and entrance area, vehicular circulation and drop-off. This reduction of parking could be partially offset by re-striping the remaining parking lot. The current minimum width of a parking space required by code is 8.5'. Re-painting the lines in the remaining lot would result in an additional 23 spaces. The net loss of parking spaces, post construction, would be 41.

Staff has observed the parking usage in this portion of the park and determined that the northern most portion of the parking area is not used when spaces closer to the activities are available. There are 42 spaces in this lot. Staff concludes that the empty spaces would offset the reduction of parking proposed by this plan – see staff Parking Analysis, Attachment #10.

An NRI/FSD exemption has been filed. Since the site is an existing developed parking lot, neither a partial or full NRI/FSD is required.

Phoenix Engineering has contacted the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS). The indications from DPS are that SWM will not be required on this site due to the reduction of parking as well as the overall reduction of impervious area. A stormwater management concept will be submitted for final approval to Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS).

V COST AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. Cost

The construction cost for the facility is estimated to be \$694,551 including \$237,000 for the skateboard equipment and \$160,281 for contingency (30%) – see Phoenix Engineering’s cost estimate, Attachment #11. With the addition of \$69,455 for staff construction management and inspection chargebacks (10%), the total project cost is \$764,006.

B. Schedule

The facility will open at the beginning of FY06, in July 2005. The proposed schedule for design and construction of the skateboard facility is as follows:

- December 2003 – advertise request for design services
- March 2004 – begin design stage
- August 2004 – approve permitted set of construction documents
- September 2004 – Bidding and contracting for construction and equipment
- January 2004 – begin construction
- June 2005 – complete construction
- July 2005 – open facility

C. Project Design

The Department expects to begin the design process in December using funds in the level-of-effort Minor New Construction PDF. A Specific Program of Requirements (SPR) has been prepared to hire a consultant to provide the design for the infrastructure that will house the skateboard park, and to provide the list of skateboard elements and specifications for the skateboard equipment.

D. Project Description Form (PDF)

In October, the Planning Board approved a "placeholder" PDF for construction of the Olney Manor Skateboard Park. The PDF requested a \$615,000 appropriation in FY05 to construct the skateboard park. In transmitting the proposed CIP to the County Executive and County Council, the Chairman informed them that the Planning Board expected to review a facility plan, cost estimate, and revised PDF on December 4, 2003.

The Chairman and Department will meet with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on December 5, 2003 to advocate for the proposed CIP. Since the proposed Olney Manor Skateboard PDF programs expenditure of County General Obligation bonds that compete within the County's Spending Affordability Guidelines (SAG), the project is more competitive if it complies with the County's "readiness criteria." One of those criteria is that a facility planning cost estimate has been completed.

The PDF shows the FY04 facility planning cost estimate adjusted for inflation (1.024), assuming that the contract will be encumbered in FY05. The facility is expected to open in FY06.

The Operating Budget Impact (OBI) shown on the PDF is the Commission's OBI and does not include the costs for the Recreation Department to actually operate the facility.

E. Construction

A construction contract package will be prepared that will contain two parts. The first part will be advertised for a contractor to construct the pad and infrastructure. The second part would be advertised for a skateboard company to design the layout for the skateboarding equipment and install it. Design and placement of the skateboard park elements is highly specialized.

VI ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment #1 – Letter from Jimena Ryan
- Attachment #2 – Map of all 8 sites evaluated
- Attachment #3 – 8-Sites Evaluation Matrix
- Attachment #4 – Letter from Charles Carter
- Attachment #5 – Memorandum from John Lyons
- Attachment #6 – Letter from Oakdale Emory United Church
- Attachment #7 – Letter from PEPCO

Attachment #8 – Olney Manor Skateboard Facility PDF
Attachment #9 – Letter from Greg Bayor
Attachment #10 – Staff Parking Analysis
Attachment #11 – Summary Cost Estimate
Attachment #12 – Facility Plan Report