

Skateboard Park
for
Olney Manor
Recreational Park
Facility Plan
Report

Prepared for:
**The Maryland National Capital
Park and Planning Commission
Park Development Division**

By:
Phoenix Engineering, Inc.
Consulting Engineers
1420-A Joh Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21227

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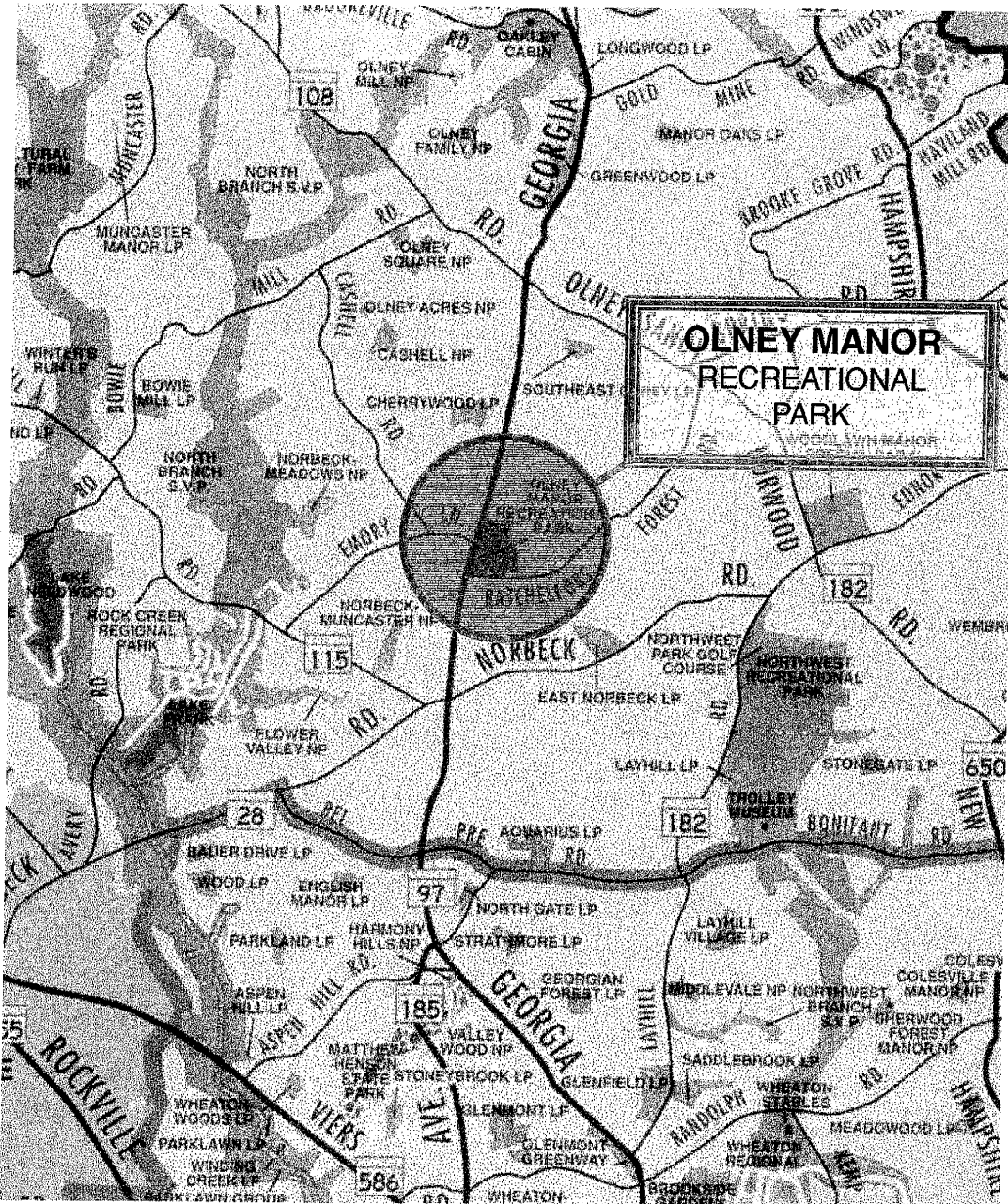
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SKATEBOARD PARK IN ONLEY MANOR RECREATIONAL PARK



Project Overview

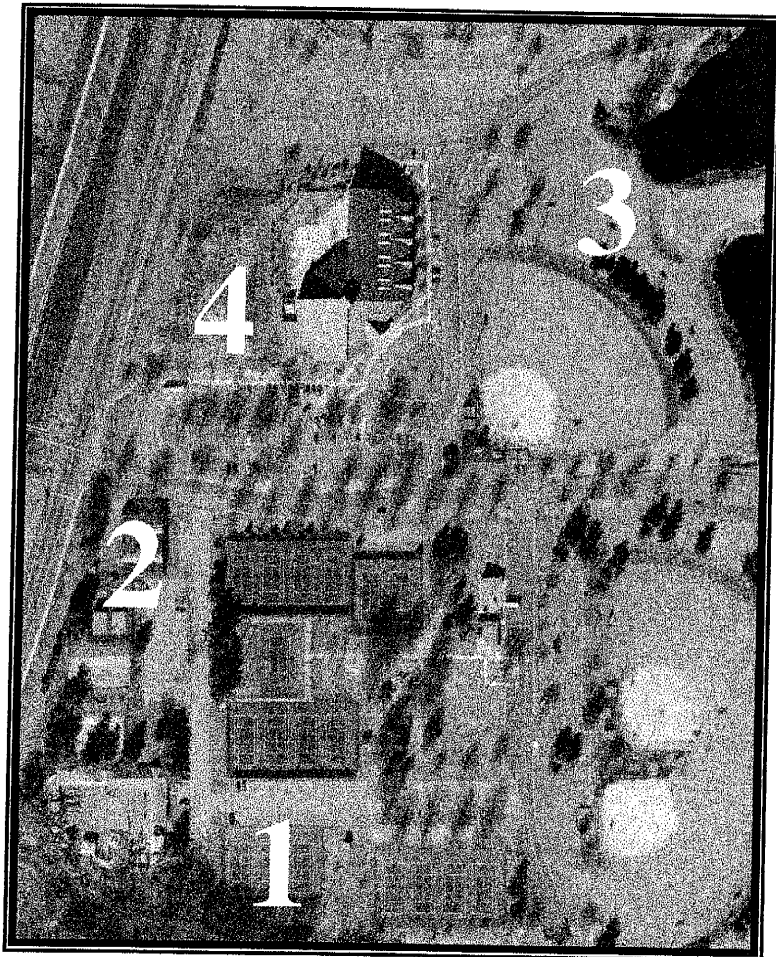
For several years, there has been a growing awareness of the need for skateboard parks in the County. In July of 2001, the Planning Board received a report entitled "Roller Hockey, In-line Skate and Skateboarding Report." In that document the authors documented the need in the County for these facilities. Specifically, the report noted the

need for a skateboard facility in the Olney area. Subsequently, MNCPPC staff identified and the Board approved Olney Manor Recreational Park as the location for this facility. Olney Manor Recreational Park is located on Georgia Avenue in northeast Montgomery County. Generally the park is well suited for a facility of this nature. As a regional facility, it draws users from a large area and currently supports a variety of active recreational activities. Included in the 61 acres that make up the park there are racquetball courts, handball courts, two volleyball courts, two small playground areas, one associated with a picnic area, three softball fields, a Little League baseball field and a regulation baseball field, 17 tennis courts, and an indoor swim center operated by the Recreation Department. In addition, the park has adequate parking, two ponds, and restrooms.

The proximity of the park to Georgia Avenue provides convenient vehicular access. Users can also reach the park by bus or by foot on sidewalks. Convenient public transportation and pedestrian access is significant because many of the users of skateboard parks are not yet able to drive.

The design process began with the identification and evaluation of various potential sites within the park. Areas were identified that are approximately 1/3 to 1/2 an acre in size and relatively flat. The sites were evaluated using a variety of criteria. The top rated sites were presented to the community at a Public Meeting held on September 2, 2003 at the Longwood Recreation Center.

Notice for the Community Input Meeting on the potential sites within the park was sent by mail to the adjacent neighbors, and civic association presidents within a one-mile radius. In addition, information was prepared in an electronic format so that it could be easily distributed via e-mail. Messages were passed to leaders in the various user groups for circulation. About ninety people attended that meeting and the staff received many comments by e-mail prior to the presentation.



During the Community Input meeting several issues became clear. First, there is a community of skateboarders that desperately wants a skateboard park in this area. Youth and parents who feel that individually, they have a limited window of opportunity to utilize such a facility dominate this group. Many of these people have been involved in the process for several years. Several youth made comments about the proportion of their lives that it has taken to get this far in the process. They wondered if they were working for the next generation of skaters.

The second thing that became clear is that there are user groups who oppose any development that would impact the facilities they currently use. The tennis community was in strong opposition to the development of a skateboard park in the tennis/volleyball area located to the south of the entrance drive. In addition to any proposed reduction in the number of courts or other associated facilities, the tennis players cited concerns about the compatibility of the uses.

Finally, concerns were raised about the fact that so much of the park is already developed for active use and that; if at all possible, the "natural" areas within the site should be preserved. Specifically, The South East Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCO) submitted testimony at the meeting opposing the development of Site #3.

Overall the community focused on two areas. Site #4, the mound between the swim center and Georgia Avenue was one. The second was identified during the meeting. It is a portion of the parking lot north of the swim center. This site became known as Site #5 the Parking Lot. Two potential sites were actually mentioned at the meeting. One citizen proposed the parking lot at the northern end of the park property, adjacent to the Oakdale-Emory United Methodist Church property. Another proposed the parking lot directly north of the swim center. After the meeting, the sites were reviewed. It was determined that the parking lot at the northern end of the park was too narrow. Staff focused on the parking lot closest to the swim center. A conceptual plan for this site was developed and evaluated.

Following the Community Input Presentation meetings were held with Recreation and Parks and M-NCPPC staff about the potential sites. The Department of Recreation stated their preference not to use the mound site (Site #4) because of the potential impact to the outdoor deck area and its proximity to the proposed location. They later made it clear that their first choice was Site #3, the open area near the ponds and their second choice was the parking lot to the north of the swim center.

The potential development of Site #3 is significantly impacted by a PEPCO right of way (ROW) that bisects the site. Discussions with PEPCO about the use of the site have been ongoing. On October 15, 2003, staff transmitted to PEPCO conceptual plans for the skateboard park on that site. PEPCO has reviewed the proposed development. Citing plans for planned upgrades to the utilities within the area, they have decided not to permit the development of the facility over their ROW.

Site #5, the Parking Lot site, became the preferred site and the development of preliminary plans for the skateboard facility began.

Facility Planning Process

The creation of a Facility Plan for the skateboard park included the following steps:

1. Data Collection
2. An on site meeting to assess 7 potential sites within the park was held. The team included representatives from the community, a manufacturer of skateboard ramp systems, the Department of Recreation, Countywide Planning, as well as the Park Manager and the consultant.
3. Data analysis
4. Presentation of 4 potential sites to the community including community input on site selection. An additional site was added for consideration.
5. Meetings with M-NCPPC staff and the Recreation Department staff to discuss the sites, operations and budget issues.
6. Development of conceptual designs and preliminary construction cost estimates for three sites, and evaluating the merits of each site.
7. Community input meeting to gather information from users (skateboarders) on the types of elements they would like to see in the facility.
8. Finalize Site Selection.
9. Refinement of plans based on input from staff and the Department of Recreation.
10. Obtain stormwater management concept approval from the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS)
11. Prepare preliminary design drawings (30%) and a detailed cost estimate

Site Analysis and Selection Process

The initial phase of the project was to quickly identify potential sites within the park and to objectively evaluate the merits of each. The task was to identify sites that were rectangular in nature, at least 14,500SF in size and, relatively flat or could be made flat with grading (had space for grading). M-NCPPC Staff identified several potential sites. Others were identified during site visits and analysis of air-photos and GIS information. Seven of these sites were selected and were evaluated during an on site investigation with representatives from M-NCPPC Design and Planning staff, Recreation and Parks staff, the community, a skateboard equipment manufacturer, the Park Manager and the consultant. The Criteria for evaluating the potential sites included the following:

- The estimated cost of construction
- Potential “skate ability” (size and shape)
- How quickly the facility could be opened
- Visibility of the facility
- Access and (ADA) considerations for spectator areas

- Impacts of existing facilities
- Conflicts with other park uses
- Proximity to parking and drop off and public transportation
- Proximity to existing restroom facilities
- SWM potential
- Environmental impacts
- Public Reaction

The seven sites included:

1. Open area adjacent to the Softball Field and the Ponds
2. Existing Handball and Volleyball courts
3. Center Court Tennis Area
4. Triple Tennis Court adjacent to the maintenance facility
5. Double Basketball court
6. Picnic area along the eastern Park Boundary
7. The Mound Between Georgia Avenue and the Swim Center

A matrix of the potential sites and the evaluation criteria was used during a site investigation by a group of participants representing Park and Planning, and Department of Recreation staff as well as a community member and a representative from a skateboard company to rate each of the sites. The exercise also stimulated discussions during the process. [See Appendix C] Following the meeting the sheets were collected and a short list of four sites to take to the community for input was developed. The four sites included:

1. The Triple Tennis Court adjacent to the Maintenance Facility
2. The Handball/Volleyball Court Area
3. Area between Softball Field #3 and the pond
4. The Mound between Georgia Ave. and the Swim Center

The Triple Tennis Court adjacent to the Maintenance Facility

This site offered adequate space for the park on existing pavement. This was extremely attractive relative to speed at which the facility could be opened. The site also offers good potential for a spectator area constructed at the parking lot level. Access to the restroom was reasonable. There are also some negative impacts with the development of this site. First, the Tennis community would be impacted by the loss of one court (two replacement courts could be constructed adjacent to the current championship court). There would be conflicts with noise coming from the Skateboard Park.



Photo 1: Triple Tennis Court

The Handball/Volleyball Court Area

The existing pavement of the handball court could be used initially to get the park in operation quickly. This site has two relatively level platforms. One is at the same elevation as the elevation of the handball courts. The second, slightly lower platform is currently occupied by two Volleyball Courts. The Volleyball courts would be re-graded and developed as additional skating area. The Outdoor Handball (and tennis backboard) and Volleyball users would be displaced with the development of this site. Volleyball courts have modest size requirements and could be redeveloped in another portion of the park. Noise conflicts with the adjacent tennis courts could be a problem with this site.

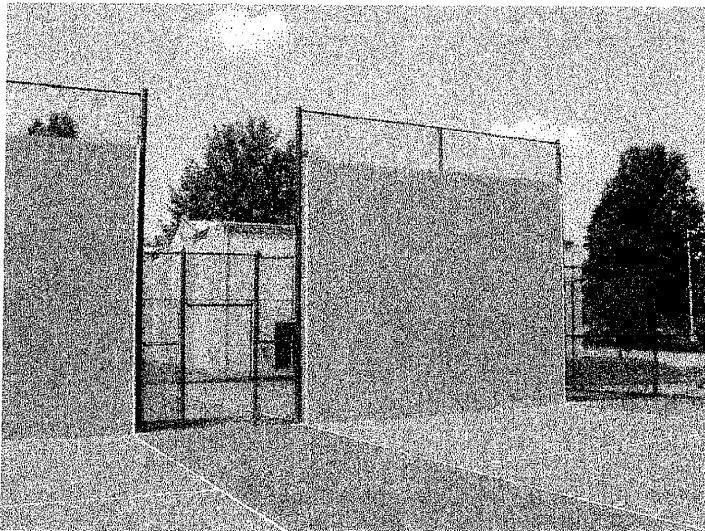


Photo 2 Existing Handball Courts

Area between Softball Field #3 and the pond

This site is not currently developed and it is away from existing active uses. It has the potential for good drop-off circulation and access to the restrooms is adequate. There

are some significant disadvantages to this site. The foremost is the fact that PEPCO holds a Right of Way (ROW) that bisects the site. Fly balls from the adjacent softball field could be an issue. A screen could be used to protect the skaters. The community indicated that this area of "open space" in the park was desirable and felt that it should be preserved. A concept plan was forwarded to PEPCO for their consideration. They decided that they would not permit the development of the Skateboard Park within their ROW.



Photo 3: Site #3 Open Area near the Ponds

The Mound between Georgia Ave. and the Swim Center

This site has adequate space and good proximity for drop-off and parking. The development of this site would be costly due to the amount of grading required. To provide access, the top of the mound would need to be removed. A berm would be maintained to buffer the site from Georgia Avenue. The Commission, at the time the pool was constructed, deeded this property to the County. This site was unacceptable to the Montgomery County Department of Recreation because of the potential impacts to the outdoor deck area.



Photo 4: The Mound Site

Elements of a Skateboard Park

There is no standard skateboard park. In fact, the challenge is to develop a facility that can remain dynamic. A healthy skateboard park is one that is constantly being manipulated by the users. One of the strong desires that came out of the discussions with the skateboard community was for a park with smaller elements like rails and fun-boxes that could be relocated and adjusted by the users. There are however some basic elements that provide the structure of the park. First, the skateboards roll on a smooth relatively level pavement surface. This pavement can be either a very smooth asphalt or concrete. Typical parks have between 10,000 to 20,000 square feet of pavement. Fencing encloses the pavement or skate area. The fence separates the skaters from spectators and protects both. The fencing also permits controlled access and the collection of fees. A control point at the gate typically includes a small structure to house the staff operations, the storage of maintenance equipment and rental gear (helmets and pads).

From a risk management standpoint, signage is an important component. Signs outlining the park rules and the consequences for disobeying the rules are placed at the entrance to the park. This will assist the staff with the duty of protecting the users and insuring the safe operation of the facility. The park will include a system of ramps, half-pipes fly-boxes and other elements. These elements are placed directly on the pavement in an arrangement that permits the user to move through the park and engage a sequence of elements. Frequently, designated viewing areas outside the fence are provided for spectators. In many cases relatively tall elements are located at the edges of the park. This can restrict views into the park. When possible, viewing areas should be situated on higher ground adjacent to the enclosure in areas that permit good views of the skateboarders. Finally, skateboarding and inline skating are strenuous activities. A

drinking fountain and seating for the participants are important elements to provide in the skateboard facility.

SKATEPARK ANATOMY

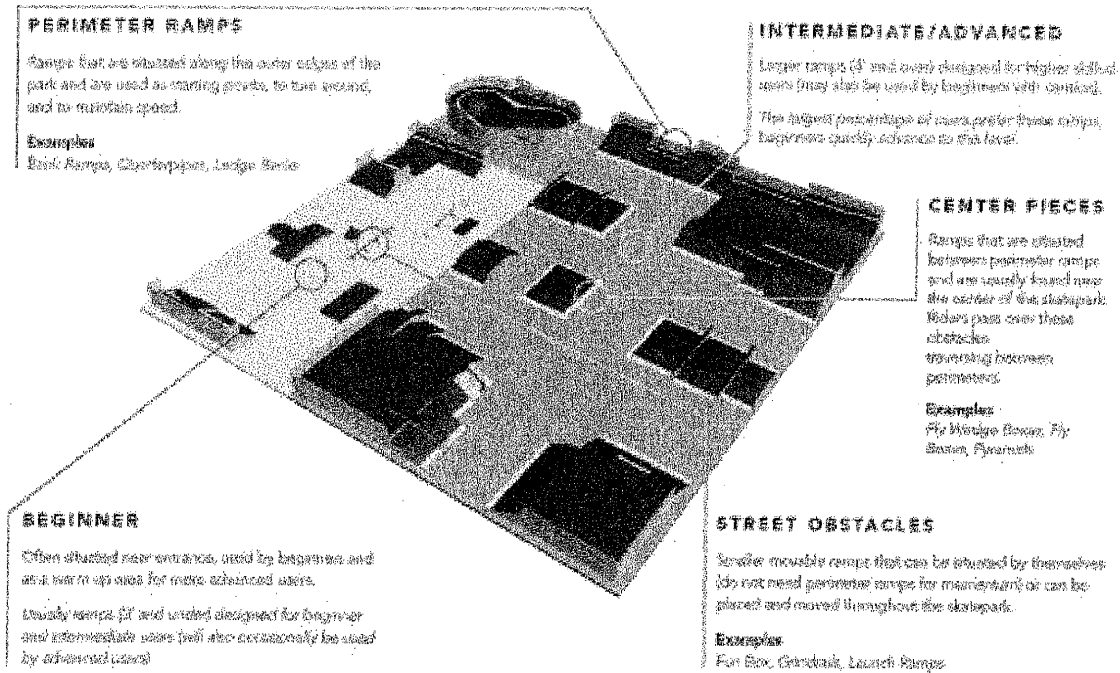


Figure 1: The Elements of a Skateboard Park (Courtesy of RAMPTECH®)

Existing Conditions Site #5 “Parking Lot Site”

The existing parking lot in this area includes two groups of 2 parking bays separated by a landscaped strip. The overall parking lot is roughly 141' wide and is bound by curb and gutter. The pavement slopes generally from the west to the east at a rate of about 4-5%. Storm water flows in the curb and gutters at the edges of the parking lot and is collected in inlets at the east end of the lot. Honey locust trees are located in the landscape islands at the ends and along the landscape strips. The parking lot is situated relatively close (approximately 31') to Georgia Avenue and roughly 3.5' off the property line. There is an existing sanitary sewer line serving the swim center located to the south of the parking lot.

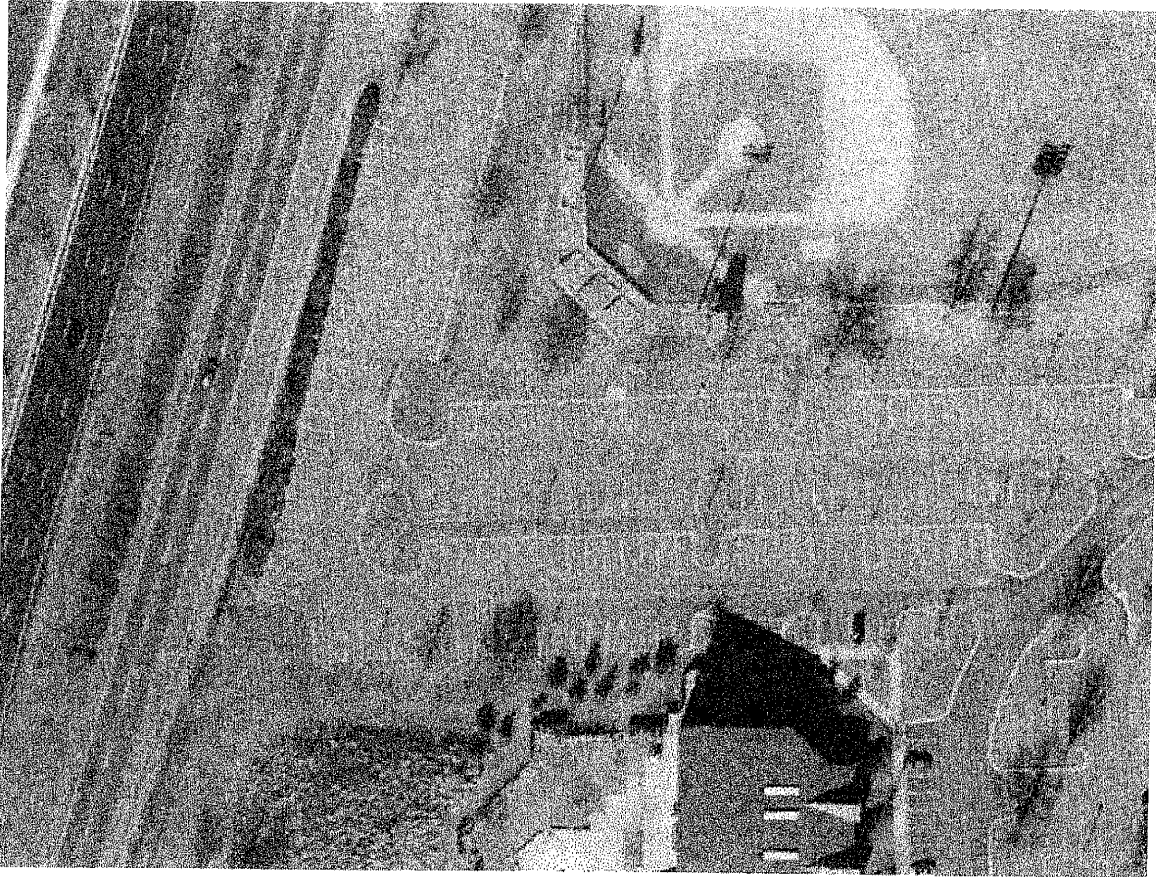


Photo 5: Air Photo of Proposed Skateboard Park Site

Parking Considerations

As mentioned previously, the site has been designed to provide for good vehicle circulation to accommodate the drop-off of skateboarders. In addition, the proximity to public transportation and sidewalks will further facilitate access by the users to the site. The demographics and data gathered from other parks in the area indicate that most of the users do not drive and will need to rely on public transportation or on parents to drop them off.

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 standard 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. [see Appendix B]

M-NCPPC Staff has observed the parking usage in this portion of the park. They have 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. The conclusion by

the staff is that the empty spaces would more that offset the reduction of parking proposed by this plan.

The Concept Plan for the Skateboard Park

The proposed skateboard park will be located in the south west corner of the existing parking area that lies north of the swim center complex. (See Photo #5) The proposed plan for the site will actually slightly reduce the amount of impervious surface in the park. [Appendix X] The existing parking lot pavement will be removed to permit the grading required to achieve a surface with a maximum slope of 2%. To permit accessible access to the facility on the eastern side of the park much of the grading will occur on the western end. A low wall is proposed along the west end and a portion of both the north and south sides. This will maximize the available space and limit the extent of the grading. This wall will not be over 30" tall and will also provide a vantage point for a spectator area.

The plan includes a buffer area between Georgia Avenue and the Skateboard Park. Currently, the parking in this area is about 31' away from Georgia Avenue (3.5') off the property line. The distance the proposed pavement is away from Georgia Avenue increases to an average of 62' (46' min. to 76' max.). The plan proposes planting both evergreen and deciduous trees in this area to buffer views of the facility.

Access to the park will come from several sources. As we have mentioned above, most of the users of this park will not be drivers. The plan provides a drop-off area near the entrance to the park for those who will arrive by car and will be dropped-off and picked-up. The sidewalk along Georgia Ave. will be a route that many will take to reach the park. The plan provides convenient access from Georgia Avenue on a sidewalk that connects to the entry plaza. The walk continues and connects to the existing walk system serving the swim center. Those using public transportation (the Ride-On bus stops at the park entrance) will also find ready access to the Skateboard Park along this sidewalk.

The actual skating surface will be smooth asphalt. A 10' high vinyl coated chain link fence will enclose the park. Access to the park will be controlled at one gate. Adjacent to the gate there will be a small structure [see Appendix D] to house the staff operations, storage of equipment and rental gear (helmets and pads). The small building will be heated and air-conditioned and it will be able to be secured when not in use.

The equipment within the park will offer the users a variety of experiences. During our conversations with the youth and observations of other facilities we learned that having a system that is dynamic and progressively challenging will insure the long-term success of the park. The proposed equipment would include the ramps, half-pipes and fly-boxes and pyramids that are customary for parks in the area. We also propose adding more of the smaller street elements such as rails, fun-boxes and kickers. These elements can easily be relocated by the users to customize their personal experience. At the other end of the experience spectrum is the "Bowl" (it functions like an empty swimming pool) or "Plazas." By including elements of this type the attraction of the park is broadened to include skaters with different interests and skill sets.

Regulatory Compliance

Environmental Features

The development of the Skateboard Park on the "Parking Lot Site" will not significantly impact any environmental features.

Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation

Due to the nature of the proposed improvements and the impacts to the site the project will be exempt from the Forest Conservation requirements.

Stormwater Management/Water Quality

Phoenix Engineering has contacted Mark Ethridge at 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. [see Appendix E] A stormwater management concept will be submitted for final approval to Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS)

Community Outreach / M-NCPPC Coordination

Progress meetings were held throughout the design process. M-NCPPC Staff from Park Development, Montgomery County Recreation Department, as well as, the Olney Manor Recreational Park attended these meetings both at the site and in the office.

The first Public Meeting was held on September 2, 2003 at the Longwood Recreation Center. This meeting was well attended. The community raised concerns about the impacts of this development on the existing facilities within the park. These concerns were balanced by the voices of the youth and parents indicating how valuable a skateboard park would be to them. As the meeting was wrapping up a consensus was forming and the focus was on another potential site, the Parking Lot north of the Swim Center. Following the meeting this site was officially added to the list of potential sites and conceptual plans for it were developed.

A second community meeting was held on October 23, 2003 at the Longwood Recreational Center. At this meeting we were looking for input from the youth about the type of elements that they would like to see in the park. After a short presentation, the participants were provided with a check list of potential elements. They then broke up into smaller groups to discuss the options and develop sketches showing their dream skateboard park. The group came back together for an opportunity for the individuals to share their thoughts and plans. In addition to the youth, parents and community members attended this meeting to show their support.

Cost Estimate for Construction

An estimate of the costs for the construction of the proposed facility was prepared by Phoenix Engineering, Inc. The following is a summary of that estimate. The complete estimate can be found in Appendix F.

Summary Estimate of Construction Costs

Demolition and Grading	\$38,550.00
<i>This item includes: removal of asphalt pavement (full depth), tree removal, removal and storage of existing lights, adjustments to existing manholes</i>	
Skateboard Area Development	\$163,950.00
<i>This item includes: asphalt skate pavement, concrete pad for building, segmented concrete block walls, Chain link fence and gate, entry structure for staff, drop-off plaza development including benches and water fountain, bleachers for the viewing area, and signage.</i>	
Road and Parking Improvements	\$39,470.00
<i>This item includes new concrete curb and gutter, asphalt pavement, and re striping parking</i>	
Site Utilities, Drainage, SWM, SEC	\$37,500.00
<i>This item includes electric, water and communication connections, relocation of existing lights, sediment and erosion control measures</i>	
Modular Ramp System	\$237,000.00
<i>This item includes the purchase and installation of a system of skateboard ramps and equipment</i>	
Landscape Signage and Site Furnishings.....	\$17,800.00
<i>This item includes tree, shrub and sod planting</i>	
Construction Estimate.....	\$534,270.00
30% Cost Contingencies	\$160,281.00
Total Construction Costs.....	\$694,551.00