



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901MCPB
Administrative Item: B
Date: 12/9/04

December 3, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Donald K. Cochran, *DKC* Deputy Director
Department of Park and Planning

FROM: Patricia A. McManus, Design Supervisor *pm*
Park Development Division

SUBJECT: Briefing Regarding Feasibility Study for a Combined Facility:
Layhill Village Local Park, Mid-County Recreation Center and
Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29

RECOMMENDATION

Staff should continue to work with County staff to resolve outstanding issues with preferred Scheme 8 as described, prior to submission of the project for mandatory referral.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is a joint agency study undertaken by the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, in cooperation with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, Montgomery County Public Schools, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to assess the feasibility of incorporating an elementary school onto the sites of the Mid-County Recreation Center and Layhill Village Local Park. The Planning Board was briefed on this project on July 29, 2004, and staff was directed to proceed with the feasibility study. Work on the feasibility study began in October 2004. The purpose of this briefing is to update the Planning Board on the progress of the project.

The study area is approximately 23 acres in size and is bounded by Layhill Road to the west, Queensguard Road to the north, and Sullivan Lane and Matthew Henson State Park to the south. The area is comprised of the 10-acre park, a 10-acre County-owned parcel for the recreation center, and a 3-acre privately owned parcel that Montgomery County Public Schools intends to purchase. Refer to Attachment A for a

- The recreation center and school buildings should be merged if possible to maximize open space areas and to expand opportunities for community use of the facilities.
- The number of fields should be maximized to meet the increased demand.
- The condition of fields should be improved, and overlap fields should be minimized.
- Parking should be located near the fields with access between fields.

Other

- Traffic and noise should be minimized in the residential community.
- Facilities should be shared as much as possible to the benefit of each agency.

PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS

Each agency submitted a program of requirements for incorporation into the study. Attachment C is the detailed Program of Requirements submitted by the M-NCPPC. Major program elements for all facilities are outlined below.

Montgomery County Department of Recreation

- Recreation center building – approximately 24,400 net square feet.
- Parking - approximately 200 parking spaces for the building and all site activities.
- Vehicle drop-off to the front door of the facility.
- Playground – approximately 5,000 square feet.
- Multipurpose court (100' x 200') for in-line hockey, basketball, volleyball/badminton, and tennis courts overlaid on the surface.
- Fields – utilize existing park fields.

Montgomery County Public Schools

- Elementary school. – two-story building with east-west orientation for energy efficiency.
- Vehicle drop-off for busses.
- Vehicle drop-off for cars.
- Parking – Approximately 40 spaces for staff with additional parking for events.
- Kindergarten play area.
- Paved play surface.
- Field for play near school.

The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

- Trail connection from the Matthew Henson Trail to the recreation center and the on-road bicycle route on Queensguard Road.
- Playground – could be shared with recreation center.
- One adult soccer field (220' x 360').
- One adult softball field (275'-300' outfield) with soccer overlay (195' x 330').

- One adult softball field (275' outfield) with small rectangular field overlay (150' x 250').
- Parking - approximately 50 parking spaces per field.
- Three tennis courts, if possible.
- Stormwater management for facilities, including fields.
- Maintenance access to all facilities and clearly defined maintenance boundaries.
- Design of fields, courts and facilities should comply with the M-NCPPC standard details, including sizes, ancillary elements, grading, and field orientation.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation hired Grimm & Parker Architects to conduct a feasibility study for the combined facilities. The study was conducted over a five-week period, and eight conceptual schemes were developed. Scheme 8, shown on Attachment D, was preferred by all agencies, because it met more of the primary goals of each agency than did any of the other alternatives. Scheme 8 includes the following elements:

Preferred Scheme 8

- Recreation center building attached to the school building with the potential to share gymnasium space.
- East-west orientation of school building.
- Approximately 240 parking spaces.
- Multipurpose court separated from the neighborhood.
- Shared playground by park and recreation center.
- Kindergarten play area for school.
- Paved play area for school.
- Two adult soccer fields at minimal acceptable size (195' x 330'). Preferred size is 220' x 360'.
- Two softball fields (275' outfield).
- Trail connection from Matthew Henson Trail to recreation center and Queensguard Road.
- Potential vehicle connection to Sullivan Lane to improve vehicle circulation.
- Protection of stream buffer.
- Assumes underground stormwater quality and quantity systems.
- Assumes off-site reforestation.

PHASING STRATEGY AND SCHEDULE

The project is proposed for construction in two phases. The first phase would include the recreation center, 150 temporary parking spaces for the recreation center, a

multipurpose court, one new adult soccer field (195' x 330'), surface stormwater management systems, and reforestation as required to comply with forest conservation laws. All of the facilities for the recreation center would be built on the existing County-owned property, and the park site would remain in its existing condition. The recreation center program would utilize the existing park facilities, along with the new field. Refer to Attachment E for the Phase 1 plan.

The second phase would construct the elementary school, the permanent parking areas and vehicular circulation, the kindergarten play area, a paved play area, two softball fields (275' outfield), two adult soccer fields (195' x 330'), trail connections, and reconfiguration of the park playground area as necessary. Stormwater management facilities would be located underground, and reforestation would occur off-site as required to comply with forest conservation laws. Refer to Attachment F for the Phase 2 plan.

A draft of the feasibility study report has been submitted to each agency for review and comments. The consultant will incorporate agency comments, and the report will be finalized in December. The feasibility study will be presented to the Mid-County Recreation Advisory Board on December 16, 2004. The Department of Public Works and Transportation has expressed its intent to proceed with Phase 1 of the project. They will conduct a public meeting in late winter and prepare plans for a mandatory referral submission next spring.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Commission staff submitted comments on the draft feasibility report, and key concerns are summarized below. Staff's understanding is that these comments and issues will be resolved and incorporated into the final report. Park and Planning staff agree that Scheme 8 is the preferred alternative. The concept plans have not addressed site engineering issues, including grading and stormwater management, in enough detail to ensure that the concept plan is feasible and that all facilities can be constructed as shown on the plan. Specific concerns with each phase are outlined below:

Phase 1

- A surface stormwater management system is proposed on the County-owned parcel, but it is not shown on the plan. Staff is concerned that stormwater management requirements may result in the elimination of the new soccer field or may reduce it to a youth-sized field. An underground stormwater management system may be required to retain an adult-sized field, however the recreation center project does not currently have funding for this.
- The required stormwater quality and quantity facilities should be roughly calculated, schematically graded and shown on the plan to fully understand the impact to the proposed plan.
- The new soccer field is necessary for the increased demand that the recreation center would place on the existing park fields.

Phase 2

- The plan maximizes the use of the entire site, and there are some significant grade changes across the study area. Most of the program elements require relatively flat grades, and the recreational elements have specific grade tolerances and directional grading and drainage requirements. The proposed plan has not been graded with these considerations in mind, and stormwater management requirements have not been fully identified. Staff is concerned that the limited transition spaces between recreational elements may not be adequate to take up required grade changes, or accommodate required drainage structures and manholes.
- The site should be schematically graded, and stormwater management requirements for the facilities and fields should be roughly sized and shown on the plan to fully understand the implications to the site and field areas. Possible site implications could include awkward or unsafe grade transitions between fields, retaining walls, reduced field size, or elimination of a field.
- The fields are necessary to meet the demands of park, recreation center, and school users.

CONCLUSION

In summary, staff strongly supports the efforts of the entire team thus far and appreciates the spirit of collaboration that has occurred among the agencies. Staff believes the concept to be the best alternative but is hesitant to fully endorse it without further assurance of the feasibility of the plan as shown. Staff's intent is to ensure that all impacts to the park are fully identified.

Given the status of the project described above, staff requests the Planning Board's consent to continue to work with County staff to resolve outstanding issues, prior to submission of the project for mandatory referral. A mandatory referral for the Mid-County Recreation Center will be before the Board in Spring 2005, with a further mandatory referral for the elementary school dependent on future funding.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Vicinity Plan
- Attachment B: Existing Conditions Plan
- Attachment C: M-NCPPC Program of Requirements
- Attachment D: Scheme 8
- Attachment E: Scheme 8, Phase 1
- Attachment F: Scheme 8, Phase 2