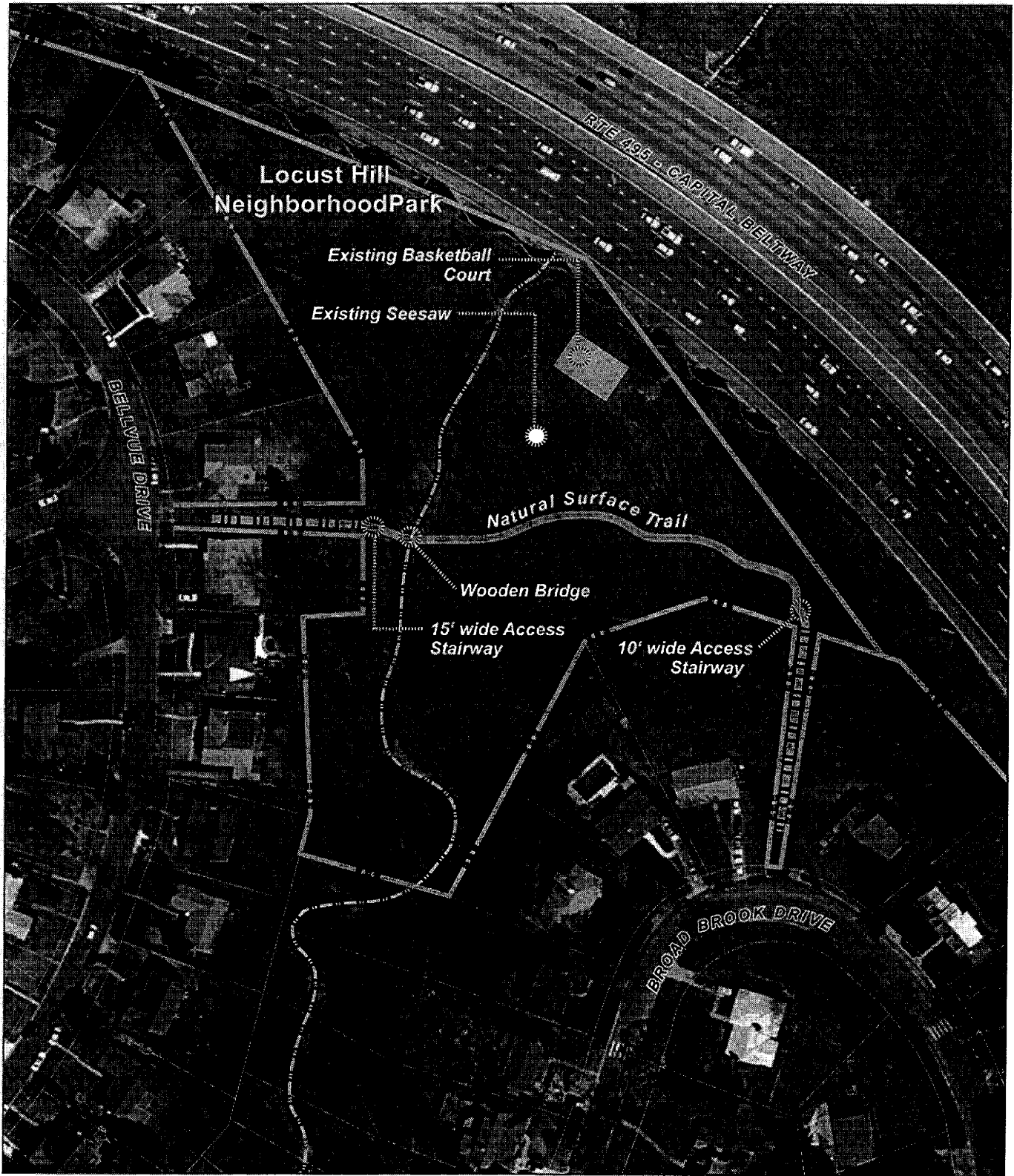


Attachment A: Existing Locust Hill Neighborhood Park



Attachment B: 2003 Staff Memo

To: Charles Loehr, Director, Department of Park and Planning
From: Karl H. Noyes, Regional Operations Manager, Southern Region
Date: September 4th, 2003
Subject: Locust Hill/Staff Recommendation/CTRACK 2003-0836

This memo recommends that the Commission reclassify Locust Hill from Neighborhood Park to Neighborhood Conservation Area.

Background

Two letters from Locust Hill Estates residents requested replacement of playground equipment removed since 1994 as a result of age and deterioration. Because of changes resulting from the development of the Capital Beltway in the 1960's, there is no vehicle access to this park. Access by foot, carrying in mowing equipment, tools, mulch, re-Placement parts, or landscaping materials makes this park labor intensive and hazardous to maintain. Currently the park is deactivated and is in the process of returning to nature.

Previously, park staff had to carry in equipment, from the street, and place boards across the stream in order to mow the park. A narrow footbridge with steps on both sides and a concrete footpath/easement with steps precluded vehicle access. In order to carry in the equipment extra personnel had to be assigned to support maintenance activities. Back injuries and muscle strains were so common that park management contracted with an adjacent neighbor to perform monthly mowing. Park police, emergency vehicles and maintenance equipment could not access this area, and due to budget related cutbacks, reduced personnel and overtime, park management removed deteriorated amenities, decreased mowing and allowed natural succession/reforestation to occur. Liability and safety concerns related to our inability to properly patrol, inspect or maintain this area were sufficient to warrant this action.

In the mean time, greater environmental awareness and compliance with our own environmental guidelines, related to sensitive areas/flood plain development, reinforced the decision not to replace deteriorated playground equipment. An alternative was to relocate the playground a short distance away, but within the immediate community, to a meadow, at the end of Elmhurst Parkway. A public hearing was conducted by the Western area Recreation Advisory Board and a decision to proceed resulted. Since then funds were appropriated and a preliminary meeting to design the playground was conducted. However, differences within the neighborhood, including disagreement on the part of the Civic association representing the community, have brought us to this point. With funding for playgrounds in short supply across the Department, staff

Recommends that the Commission change the classification of Locust Hill Neighborhood Park to Locust Hill Neighborhood Conservation Area and that the funds be used for other playground projects.

Attached for your review are current and past communications from staff concerning Locust Hill Neighborhood Park. If you would like me to draft a response to the above Referenced CTRACK letters for the Chairman's signature, I will provide.

Staff committee:

Peter Boettinger, Southern Region
Tonya Schmieler , Park Planning
John Hench, Natural Resources
Kathy Dearstine, Park Planning
Norma Kaweckki, Natural Resources
Doug Alexander, Park Planning
Captain Jake Bise, Park Police
Carole Bergman, Natural Resources
Lynn Witt, Southern Region
Carole Bergman, Natural Resources
Doug Redmond, Park Planning
Karina DeSouza, Park Planning

cc:

Les Straw
Ronnie Gathers

Attachment C: Existing Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Conservation Park

