

Summary of field notes and findings from June 2003 at Locust Hill Neighborhood Park, Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit #3, and Elmhirst Conservation Area.

PPRA was asked to do sensitive areas analysis for the areas at the terminus of Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Conservation Area near the beltway and Locust Hill Neighborhood Park. The parcel at the end of Elmhirst Parkway is actually a piece of Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit #3, which was bisected by the construction of the Beltway. I visited these areas 3 times in the month of June. The attached maps display my findings.

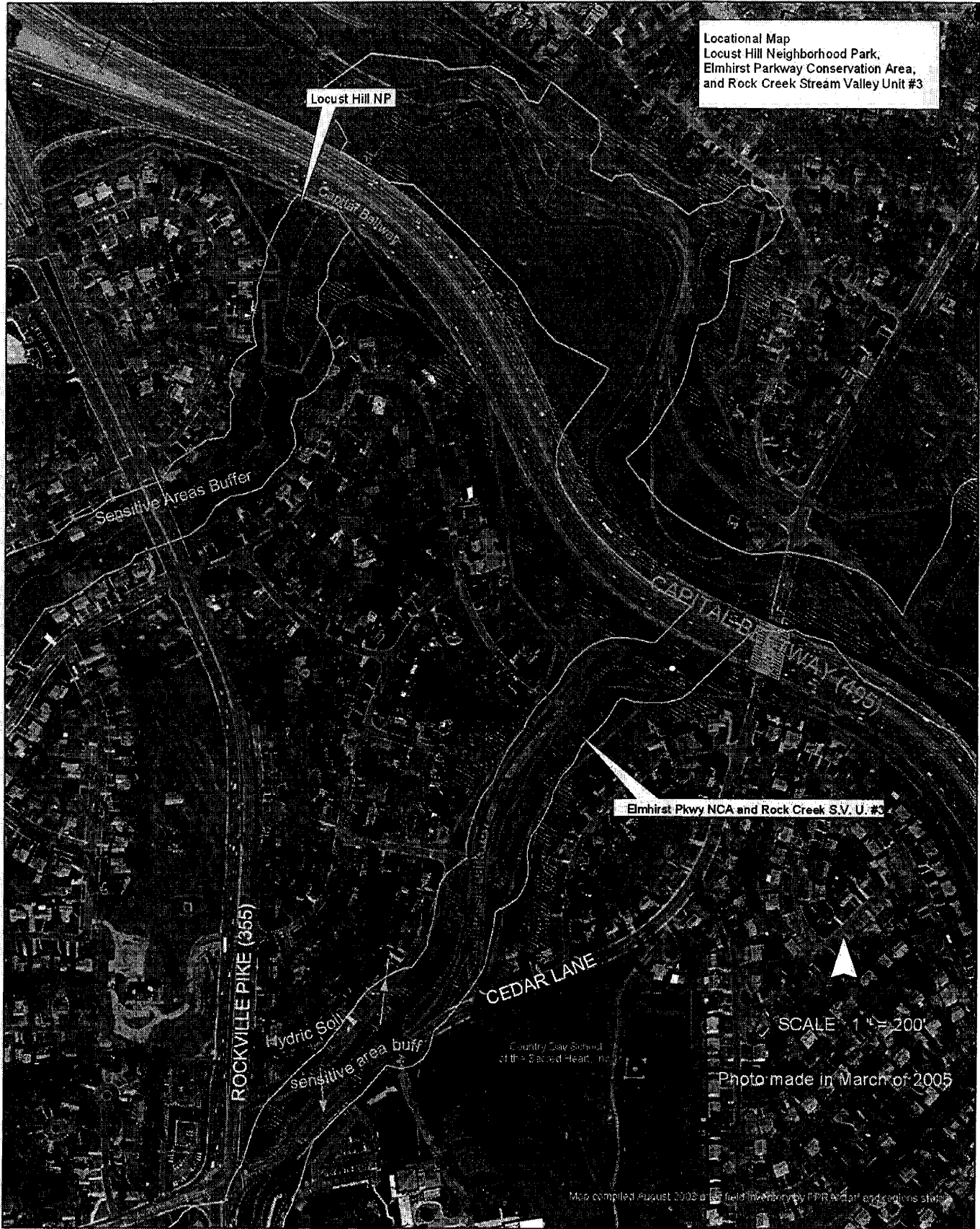
In summary slightly more than half of each of these park parcels lay within the sensitive areas buffers, as defined in the Commission document, Environmental Guidelines for Development in Montgomery County which include both perennial and intermittent streams, wetlands, 100- year floodplains, steep slopes, hydric soils and their associated buffers. This lower section of Rock Creek watershed is classified by the State as Use Class I.

Locust Hill Neighborhood Park at 9621 Bellvue Drive in Bethesda is 5.0 Acres in size. It is mostly a wooded flood plain with large trees mostly Tulip Poplars. One badly eroded stream runs along the northwest side. It has two Rights of Way paths, which serve as access to the park, however they are not owned by MNCPPC. There is no deed but both were dedicated to Public Use during the subdivision development and MNCPPC has taken responsibility for maintaining them. More than half of the park is within the sensitive areas, which totals 2.8 Acres and includes the stream and its buffer. Park amenities, although poorly maintained include concrete steps entering the park at the 2 locations, a bridge across the stream, basketball court, a see saw, one picnic table with bench seats, and one park bench. According to the park manager, the area is poorly maintained because of the difficulty in getting maintenance equipment to the site.

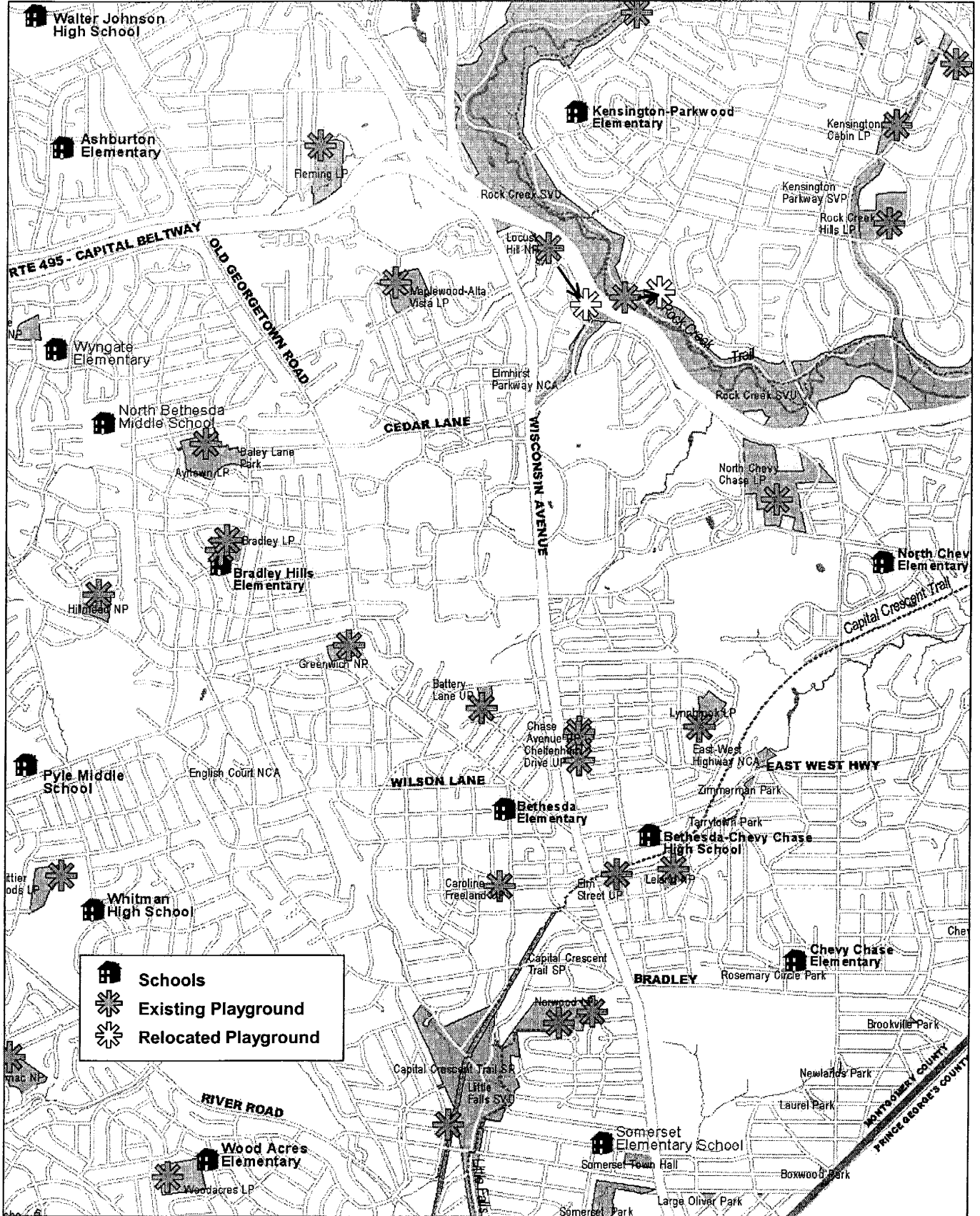
Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit #3 at the end of Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Conservation Park is an area, which has the sound wall of the Beltway, as it's northern border, a wooded drain channel on the west and perennial stream on the east. Elmhirst Parkway dead-ends at the southern tip of the parcel and provides the only access. The parcel slopes at approximately 5-7% southward to the stream. An area approximately 0.76 Acres is kept open by regular mowing and sixteen 8' high landscape trees have been planted. Of that open area, 0.45 Acres are within the sensitive area stream buffer. Other than a single park bench, the planted trees and open meadow, there are no added park amenities. Apparently local residents use the area for walking their dogs, jogging through to the paved hiker/biker trail on the opposite side of the stream, and enjoying nature.

Also of note, I discovered in the wooded area along the western border of the park near the northern end neighbors have encroached by clearing, mowing and disturbing the drainage channel. Also, a good portion of Elmhirst Parkway is mowed as if owned by the two residents at the intersection of Broad Brook Drive and The Parkway. Also attached are copies of the MNCPPC Park Inventory System Land Records, which shows that Locust Hill was acquired in 1959, and Elmhirst Parkway dedicated in 1938.

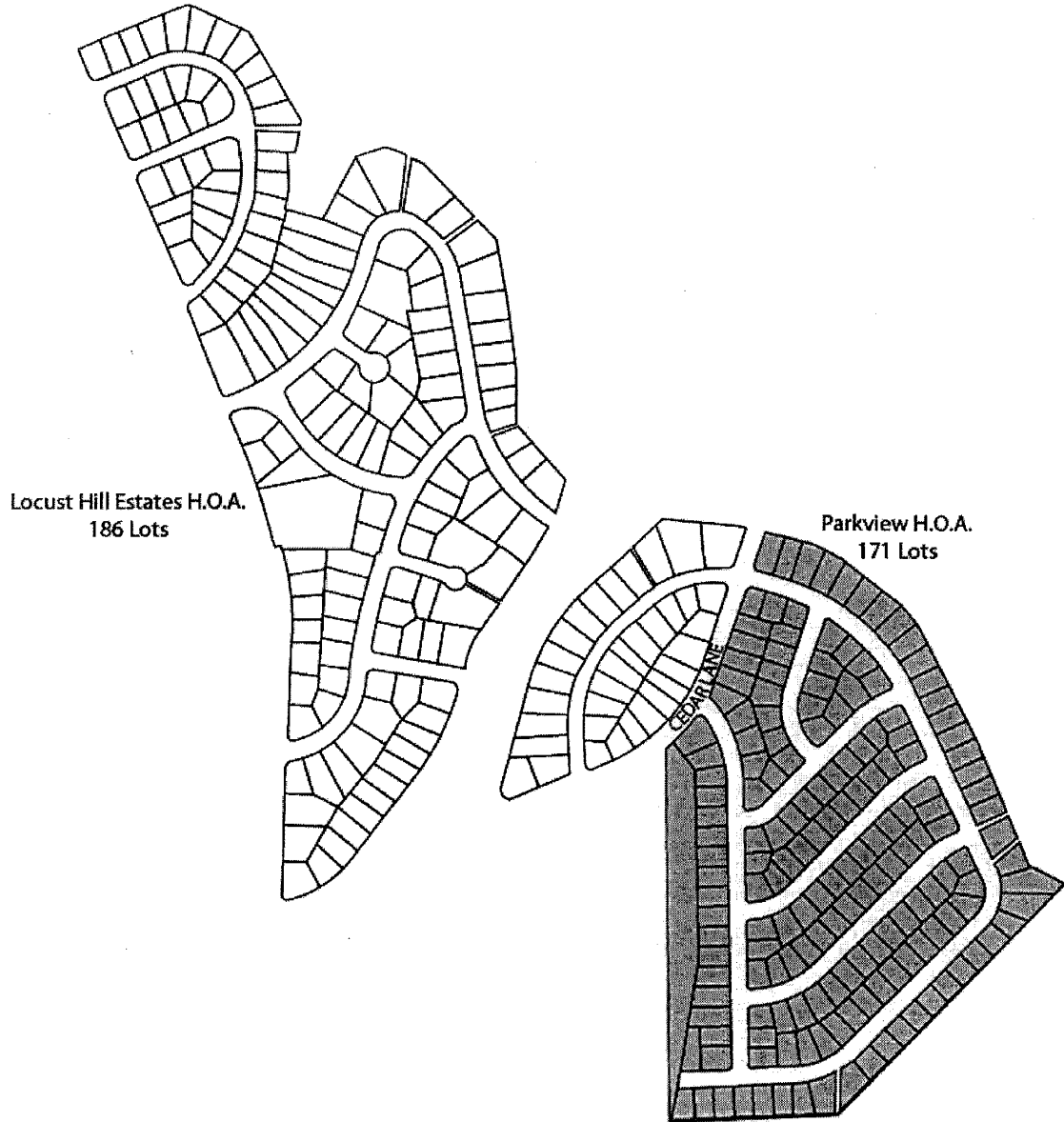
Norma Kawecki, Senior Natural Resources Specialist, Cartographer
Park Planning and Resource Analysis Unit, Countywide Planning Division,
Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning Commission
August 27, 2003



Attachment E: Playground Distribution Map

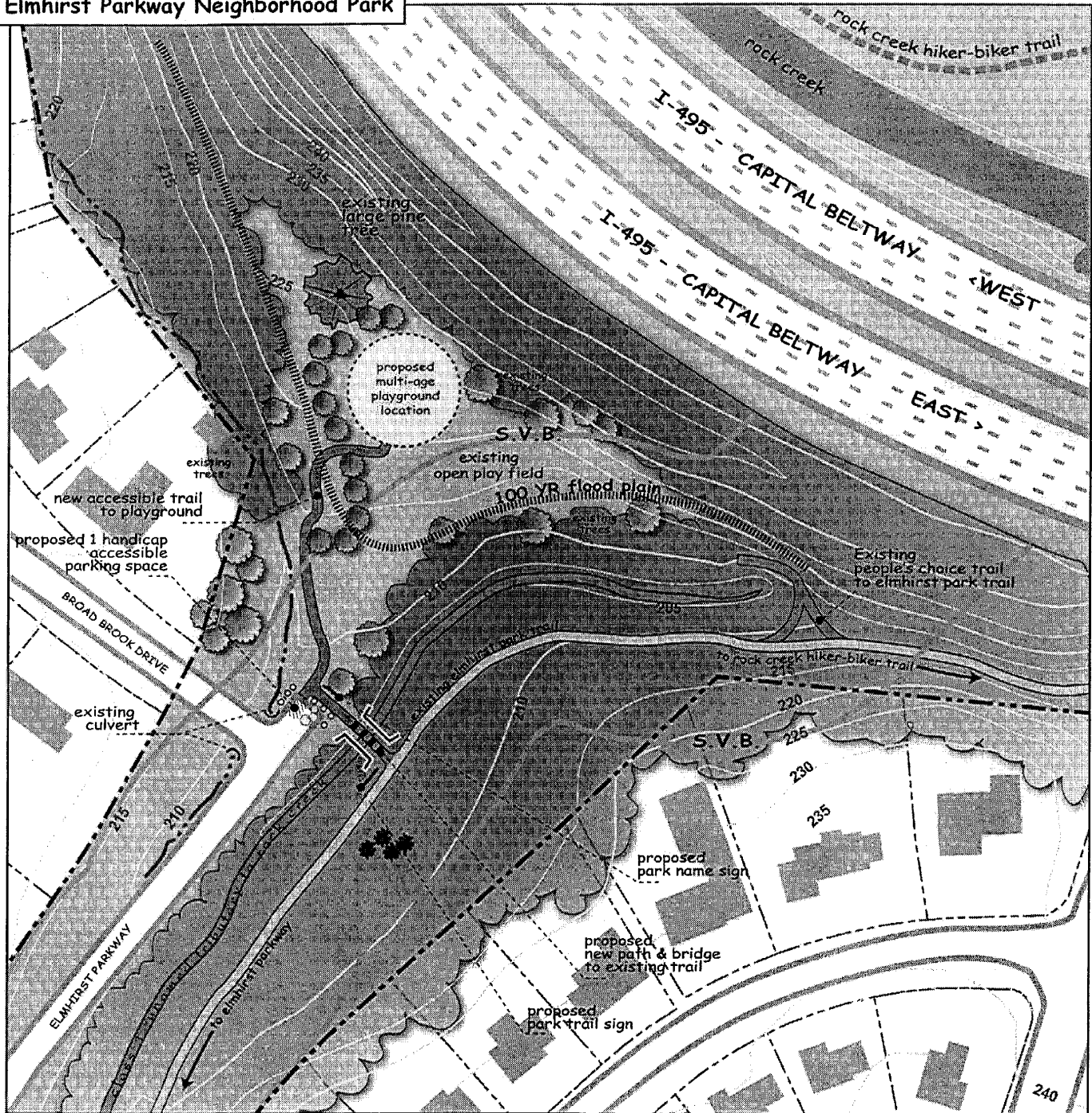


Attachment F: Service Neighborhood



Attachment G: Proposed Concept Plan for Elmhurst Parkway Neighborhood Park

Proposed
Elmhurst Parkway Neighborhood Park



P U B L I C F O R U M M E E T I N G

**Proposed Plans for
Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park**

Wednesday May 18, 2005 at 7:30pm

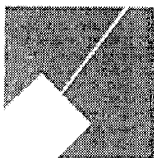
**Maplewood Alta-Vista Recreation Center
5209 Alta Vista Road, Bethesda Maryland**

Please join members of the Western Area Recreation Advisory Board and staff from The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to discuss plans for the proposed Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park. Plans include a playground (to replace the playground that used to be located at the Locust Hill Neighborhood Park), a small parking area for one accessible parking space, a walkway to the playground, a trail and bridge connector to the existing hard surface trail along the stream and new landscaping and park signage.

You and your neighbors are encouraged to participate in the planning process by listening to the presentation and then commenting on the proposal. Speakers may sign up at the beginning of the meeting. You may also send your comments in writing to the Chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board, Mr. Derick P. Berlage, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910 or email the Planning Board at mcp-chairman@mncppc-mc.org.

Once public comments have been received and staff has revised plans to reflect the public comments, this plan will be presented to the Montgomery County Planning Board for approval. The tentative date for the Planning Board presentation is Thursday, June 16, 2005. The Planning Board meeting agenda is available on the Monday before the meeting at www.mc-mncppc.org and will indicate the time of the day this item will be scheduled.

Please come and help us create a beautiful park for your neighborhood! If you have any questions or comments about this project, please contact M-NCPPC staff person, Rachel Newhouse at (301) 650 - 4388 or email at rachel.newhouse@mncppc-mc.org.



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Department of Park and Planning

Attachment I: May 18, 2005 Public Forum Summary

**Summary of Comments from the Proposed Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park
Public Meeting on May 18, 2005**

Comments from the Community:

No port-a-potties.

Locate playground so it can be viewed from the road.

Provide better access across Cedar Lane (crosswalks or crossing light).

M-NCPPC planning to move Cedar Lane playground to opposite side on street and out of flood plain in two years.

Want a hard surface trail from Bellevue Drive thru Locust Hill Park, along the Beltway wall to Elmhirst Park.

Not happy with the loss of open space.

Think new park will create a positive meeting spot for the community.

Going from nothing to something.

This will provide a central area for the children to associate with other children from the neighborhood.

Prefer the open space, there is a need for flat open areas, think this is just about M-NCPPC's need to balance things rather than serving the community.

Wants more than just open space, wants a park with more to do in it.

Mother of 2, she doesn't know anyone and thinks this is a way to meet people in the neighborhood.

Lived on Broad Brook for years and did not know of the hidden park (locust Hill). Was afraid to go there. Would have loved a playground when her children were younger. The neighborhood has changed to more families with young children.

Public!! Great use for parkland. Accessible and useable.

Right now have to drive to other playgrounds.

Liked the old playground in Locust Hill.

Very supportive, thinks a playground will be community building.