



June 24, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Lester L. Straw, Superintendent of Parks *LS*
Michael F. Riley, Chief, Park Development Division *MR*

FROM: Patricia McManus, Design Section Supervisor, Park Development Division *PM*

SUBJECT: Facility Plan for Germantown Town Center Local Park

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Approve facility plan Concept D for Germantown Town Center Local Park, including cost estimate.
- 2) Approve phasing strategy.
- 3) Approve change in park classification from a local park to an urban park.
- 4) Determine schedule for design and construction during review of the FY07-12 Capital Improvements Program.

No forest conservation plan approval is required, as the property received an exemption from forest conservation requirements.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION**Introduction**

The purpose of this project is to design a facility plan for a new park in the Germantown Town Center. The park is situated at the northern end of an 8.80-acre parcel of land, owned by Montgomery County and shared with the new Germantown Regional Library. Land uses adjacent to the site include retail uses, residential development, the BlackRock Center for the Arts, and a town commons. The parcel is bounded by Century Boulevard to the south, Pinnacle Drive to the east and Locbury Drive to the north. The library will use approximately four acres of the parcel, which is subject to considerable site constraints. The park site includes a spring and small tributary stream, an existing wetland farm pond, a road right-of-way for the future completion of Locbury Drive, and steep slopes and embankments at the eastern and western edges of the site. The open area of the park site, outside of wetland buffers and other features, is approximately two acres, most of which is sloped land. Attachment A is a vicinity plan for the park.

There are two existing residential stormwater management facilities adjacent to the park on the east and west sides of the site, which occupy approximately 2.7 acres of land. As a condition of site plan approval, the residential developer was required to cooperate with Montgomery County and the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-

NCPPC) to convert the individual storm water management ponds into a joint-use facility, as well as agree to place the land deemed no longer necessary for stormwater management into permanent open space and dedicate the land for public use.

A study to consolidate the storm water management facilities and create more usable open space was prepared in 2000 by consultants for the M-NCPPC's Environmental Planning Division. Three options were developed. The Montgomery County Planning Board, in a public hearing on April 19, 2000, preferred an option that consolidated the two residential ponds with the existing wetland pond, because it would result in an attractive pond and wetland with additional usable open space for the park and the community. The permitting agencies expressed strong opposition to this option for environmental reasons, because it did not treat stormwater quality in the upland areas and it eliminated the existing wetland and seed bank.

Based on this project history, the goal of the park facility plan has been to create an attractive park and wetland pond system, obtain additional usable open space for the community, and to achieve this in a manner that is acceptable to the regulatory agencies. The consultant team of Lewis Scully Gionet, Inc. Landscape Architects, Burgess & Niple, Inc. Civil Engineers, and Straughan Environmental Services, Inc. Environmental Planners was hired in June 2003 to design the facility plan for the park. Attachment B is the facility plan report. Appendix A of the facility plan report includes previous Planning Board decisions related to this property.

Project Funding

The facility planning study was funded by a supplemental request of \$160,000 to the FY 2002 Capital Improvements Program in the Facility Planning: Local Parks PDF. An additional \$35,000 was allocated within the PDF to fund this project. The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission received a \$300,000 developer contribution that will be used for the construction of the park from Fairfield Germantown Farms, LP on January 6, 2004. This contribution satisfied conditions of the project plan and site plan.

Facility Planning Process

The facility planning process included the following sequence of work:

1. Collect data, prepare site survey, and perform geotechnical investigations.
2. Analyze existing site conditions.
3. Prepare and obtain approval of Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Summary Map.
4. Meet with stakeholder groups to discuss program of requirements.
5. Meet with the community to discuss program of requirements.
6. Finalize program of requirements.
7. Prepare stormwater management and park design alternatives and preliminary cost estimates.
8. Discuss alternatives with regulatory agencies and stakeholder groups and revise as required.
9. Present alternatives to the Development Review Committee, the Interagency Wetlands Coordinating Committee, and the Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board.
10. Present alternatives to the community.
11. Develop preferred alternative based on input received.

12. Prepare stormwater management concept submission and obtain approval from the Department of Permitting Services.
13. Coordinate any outstanding issues with stakeholder groups and regulatory agencies.
14. Prepare forest conservation plan submission for exemption and obtain approval.
15. Prepare facility plan report, cost estimate, and operating budget estimates.
16. Present facility plan recommendations and costs to the Plan Review Committee for approval.
17. Present facility plan recommendations and costs to the Montgomery County Planning Board for approval.

PLANNING DOCUMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This new park is proposed in the Germantown Master Plan, approved and adopted in July 1989. The master plan made the following statement about the park:

Develop a public “urban park” in the stream valley to create a connection to the open space area in the adjoining residential area; the “urban park” is intended to provide a natural setting for picnic lunches and courts for basketball, tennis, and volleyball that are accessible to both employees and residents.

The master plan also stated that the Germantown Town Center should “provide a location for community festivals and events,” ... “create a network of open space providing passive recreation areas,” and “create a system of pedestrian paths and bike trails that encourage use of the open space network, facilitate access to adjacent uses, and provide on-site circulation.” When the master plan was adopted, this property was privately owned and recommended for residential development and park use. Montgomery County subsequently obtained ownership of the property as the site for the new Germantown Regional Library, and therefore assumed responsibility for the development of the park.

The Germantown Town Center Design Study, prepared by the M-NCPPC in April 1992, made additional recommendations for the town center and the urban park. Facilities that were recommended for the park include an amphitheater with lawn seating, open areas for casual recreation, facilities for picnicking, park benches, and landscape features such as a gazebo, trellis, sculpture or water feature to create interest, variety and identity. A basic requirement of the planning and design of the Germantown Town Center, including the park and the town commons, included the accommodation of Oktoberfest events, which draw approximately 40,000 to 50,000 people each year.

The July 1998 Park, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan does not include specific recommendations that would pertain to this park. Park Planning & Natural Resources Analysis Division staff indicated that active recreation needs in the project vicinity can be met on other sites. Given the physical limitations of the park site and its urban setting, staff does not recommend active recreation facilities, such as athletic fields and tennis courts, for this park.

PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS

Interest Group and Agency Input During Programming Phase

A meeting was held on July 22, 2003 with the Germantown Town Center Technical Group, to review potential program elements for the park. This is a group of town center stakeholders

and includes representatives from the Upcounty Regional Services Center, County Council staff, the M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, Germantown Regional Library, Montgomery County Library Administration, Euro MotorCars, the BlackRock Center for the Arts, Artery Development Co., Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services, and Shady Grove Adventist Hospital. The group recommended that the park should be developed as a passive park that would serve needs for informal gathering as well as large civic events that would occur on occasion. It should serve the needs of lunchtime users, employees from surrounding businesses, and visitors to the town center, as well as the needs of local residents. The water feature could be substantial, and benches, gazebos and paths could be provided. The BlackRock Center for the Arts and the Germantown Regional Library indicated that they would not program events in an amphitheater within the park, since there is already an outdoor performance area at the BlackRock Center. The group thought that there would be issues with noise and conflicting parking demands, if an amphitheater were developed in the park.

Community Outreach During Programming Phase

A workshop with the community was held on September 9, 2003 to obtain public input and ideas for the park. Most of the residents who attended the meeting live in the townhouse communities to the west and northwest of the park. The primary concern of these residents was that the main access to the library's parking lot is through the neighborhood from Celebration Way. The community also expressed concern that they did not want the final section of Locbury Drive to be built, because it would bring more traffic into their neighborhood. Both of these issues are beyond the scope of the park facility plan and involve projects that are being planned and constructed by other County agencies. There were also concerns expressed that parking in the residential neighborhoods should be discouraged.

Other comments from the community favored passive uses of the park, including attractive landscaping, using the water elements as a feature for the park, having opportunities for walking, sitting and picnicking, and possibly incorporating sculpture through the park to tie into the cultural facilities of the BlackRock Center for the Arts and the library. The community was concerned about security and adequate lighting. They also wanted the wetland areas to remain natural with possible interpretive opportunities, a pavilion or gazebo, a holiday tree, and screen planting or a clear physical definition between public and private property.

Program of Requirements

The following program of requirements was developed for the park based on input received from advisory groups, the community and the staff team.

- An outdoor assembly area for community festivals and events;
- Open lawn areas for casual recreation, such as volleyball, frisbee, ball tossing, dog walking, lawn bowling and kite flying;
- Attractive wetland and storm water management facilities that serve as primary water features and focal points for the park;
- Potential sculpture garden or incorporation of artistic elements in the park;
- Seating, picnic areas, bicycle racks, and drinking fountain;
- Naturalized, attractive plantings and planted buffers between the residences and the park;

- Pedestrian and bike path connections to adjacent uses and the Lake Churchill open space system;
- Loop trails for walking within the park, including boardwalks and bridges to span wetland areas and possible interpretive signage;
- Pavilion or a gazebo to overlook water features or natural areas;
- Holiday tree;
- Vehicle access for maintenance and security patrols;
- Attractive, safe lighting.

To address community concerns about parking and traffic, the proposed activities for the park are passive, pedestrian-oriented uses that would primarily draw neighborhood users and those who are in the town center for other reasons. Parking is not proposed within the park, and the proposed activities for the park would not generate or encourage vehicle traffic. The Germantown Town Center area was planned and developed with shared parking schemes in mind. On-street parking immediately adjacent to the park (61 spaces), as well as shared parking with local businesses and public uses is adequate to address parking needs. Maintenance and security vehicle access points to the park would be located where they have the least negative impact on surrounding neighbors.

FACILITY PLAN STUDY

Existing Site Conditions

The park site is primarily an open, grassy parcel that slopes down steeply from the east and the west to a springhead, wetlands, and a farm pond at the center of the park site. The slopes within the park range from approximately 8 to 33 percent. Some of the slopes serve as structural embankments for the two residential stormwater management ponds to the east and west of the park site. A sanitary sewer line and a water line run through the eastern side of the property.

A perennial stream flows north from the farm pond through wooded areas to Lake Churchill. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers performed a jurisdictional determination as part of the Germantown Library project in 2000 and determined the spring, wetlands, farm pond and perennial stream to be jurisdictional under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (1972). The wetland boundaries approved during the jurisdictional determination were used in the park facility plan study, and were the basis for identifying the 25-foot wetland buffer area that is regulated by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

The approved stormwater management plans for the Germantown Regional Library and the Euro MotorCars site (south of the library) treat stormwater quality on site and release stormwater quantity flows into the existing wetland system and pond. The existing residential stormwater management pond to the east of the park also releases water into the wetland pond area from a riser structure through the embankment at the east side of the site. The residential stormwater management pond to the west of the site bypasses the wetland pond and releases stormwater into the stream north of Locbury Drive. The library project is building a road embankment for the future segment of Locbury Drive that will serve as a dam for stormwater quantity control for water entering the system from Euro MotorCars, the library, and the east residential pond. Stormwater will periodically inundate the existing wetland pond and will be released downstream from a riser structure and pipe that runs through the Locbury Drive embankment.

There is an opportunity to connect the park to the terminus of an existing trail on homeowner's association property to the north of the park. This trail connection is the last section of trail that would complete a continuous pedestrian link through a public and private open space system from the Germantown Town Center to Lake Churchill and Black Hill Regional Park. This would require acquisition of an easement from the Churchill East Homeowners Association to build a portion of the trail connection on their property. The majority of this trail connector would be boardwalk, since it spans through flood plain and wetland areas.

Alternative Plans Considered

The facility planning team recommended three development options. The following chart summarizes the development options considered and their associated design and construction costs. Detailed cost summaries are included in Appendix G of the facility plan report.

Option	Description	Acres of Usable Open Space *	Development Cost
Concept A	Retains all existing stormwater management facilities within the site and on adjacent residential parcels in their current condition. Creates 1,785 linear feet of trails and boardwalks, as well as interpretive signage to provide passive recreation opportunities.	0.5 acre	\$2,625,600
Concept B	Creates large open space areas by placing both adjacent residential stormwater management facilities underground and retains the wetland pond in its current condition. Provides pedestrian terraces, 2,275 linear feet of interpretive trails, reforestation areas, and an overlook pavilion to provide passive recreation opportunities.	2.2 acres	\$6,454,400
Concept C	Creates large open space areas by placing both adjacent residential stormwater management facilities underground. Creates three additional water features in the central area of the site that also provide stormwater management functions. Provides 2,185 linear feet of boardwalks and interpretive trails, a series of overlook terraces, and an overlook pavilion to provide a wide range of passive recreation opportunities.	2.2 acres	\$7,647,200

* "Usable" open space is defined as relatively level open areas with less than 5% slope

Interest Group and Agency Input During Design Phase

The concepts were presented to the Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board on November 19, 2003, the Germantown Town Center Technical Group on November 21, 2003, the Development Review Committee on December 1, 2003, and the Interagency Wetlands

Coordinating Committee meeting on December 8, 2003. Comments are summarized as follows.

The Interagency Wetlands Coordinating Committee and the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services preferred a simple stormwater management solution that is easily adapted to the library's proposed stormwater management system, such as Concept A or B. They re-iterated that a consolidated pond option in the wetlands, similar to the one presented to them in 2000, would not be allowed. They indicated that an underground stormwater management system would be acceptable, provided that maintenance responsibilities and costs are coordinated with the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, the Churchill Community Foundation, and the Germantown Town Center Homeowners Association. The Wetlands Committee indicated that impacts to the wetlands and buffers should be avoided, but boardwalk systems and minor grading within the buffer are probably acceptable.

In general, the Development Review Committee, the Germantown Town Center Technical Group, and the Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board preferred Concept C, because it provides more amenities for the park. The favorable elements of this concept include large, usable urban spaces at the grade of the library and parking lot, a large open lawn area adjacent to a pavilion that could be used for special events, and attractive water features. These groups also expressed the importance of creating a trail connection from the park to the neighborhood trail terminus north of the park. Other comments included considerations for security, such as locating terraces at the grade of the library and parking lot, and lighting walkways.

Members of the Germantown Town Center Technical Group expressed interest in having fountains and sculptural elements in the park. They indicated that there should be a minimum of one large open level play area, and a greater open space benefit is obtained from placing the east pond underground than from placing the west pond underground.

Community Outreach During Design Phase

The project was presented to the community in a public meeting on December 16, 2003. In general, Concept C was preferred, because it provides more amenities and points of interest in the park. The favorable elements of this concept that were specifically mentioned include a large open lawn area adjacent to a pavilion that could be used for special events such as Oktoberfest, attractive water features, a holiday tree, and gardens.

Members of the neighborhood to the west of the park were concerned that the park would not be developed in the near future. They would like buffer plantings to be installed to screen the library development and parking, as well as a fence along the western edge of the property.

Several members of the Churchill East community, located to the north of the park, were present. They expressed concerns that a trail connection from the park through their community might contribute to existing security problems on the trail within their neighborhood.

As a follow-up to the public meeting, staff met with the Churchill East Homeowner's Association Board of Directors and a representative from their security company on February 23, 2004 to present the proposal for providing a trail connection from the park to the terminus of an existing trail in the Churchill East community. Part of the trail connection would be located on County property and WSSC utility easement, but most of it would be located on the Churchill East Homeowner's Association property. An easement agreement would be

required between the Association and the M-NCPPC for construction of the trail. If the trail connection were to be constructed, it would be maintained by the M-NCPPC and monitored by Park Police. The Board of Directors supported the park project, but was very concerned with loitering and illegal activity that already exists on the trail. The Board indicated during and after the meeting that they were not interested in granting an easement for the trail connection, due to security concerns, but might be willing to reconsider this in the future after the park is built. As a result the trail connection was not studied further. As the facility plan was being finalized, the Board of Directors indicated that they took another vote and would now support the trail connection.

The project was also presented to the Churchill Community Foundation, Inc. at their annual meeting on May 26, 2004. The Foundation's primary interest was that there would be no negative impact to natural systems in the watershed as a result of the project.

Recommended Concept D

Based on comments received, Concept D was developed, which combines the stormwater management design of Concept B with the park design elements of Concept C. Recommended Concept D includes the following elements:

- Two underground stormwater management systems constructed with reinforced concrete vaults and filters.
- Approximately 0.8 acre of usable open space for passive recreation, acquired by placing the west stormwater management facility underground.
- Approximately 1.4 acres of usable open space for outdoor events and passive recreation, acquired by placing the east stormwater management facility underground.
- Two new ornamental ponds to enhance the wetland areas of the site and provide opportunities for nature interpretation.
- A system of 2,380 linear feet of meandering paths and boardwalks, connecting to the surrounding neighborhoods, the library, and wetland interpretation areas.
- Accessible routes for pedestrians and vehicles, a minimum of eight feet wide with ten feet clear width between obstructions. Walkways, bridges and boardwalks are designed to support vehicle loads.
- A pergola on the east lawn area, as a focal point for the park and a gathering place for large events.
- Two overlook areas adjacent to the library, providing broad views of the ponds and naturalistic plantings of the park.
- A holiday tree at one park entrance.
- Site furnishings, including benches, bicycle racks and a drinking fountain.
- Ornamental pole lights along walkways to allow safe passage through the park at night. Lights would include reflectors to direct light downwards, in order to reduce glare for adjacent neighbors.
- Maintenance access to the park and stormwater management facilities from Locbury Drive and Pinnacle Drive, to minimize impact on neighbors.
- Trees grouped informally throughout the site.
- Buffer planting on the western boundaries of the site to screen the park and library parking lot from the adjacent residences.
- Wetland buffers planted with native wetland and meadow vegetation.
- Park design in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles and compatible with the town center setting.

The recommended alternative comes closest to meeting the original goal to consolidate stormwater management functions, create a greater water-based amenity at the center of the site, and provide usable open space for the community. The provision of usable space is necessary to fully realize the vision for this park in the master plan and the town center design study, and to support other development investment that has already occurred in the town center in accordance with master plan recommendations. The construction of this project would require the acquisition of the adjacent residential stormwater management parcels, as well as development of several agreements with Montgomery County for design and construction of the park, maintenance of the property, and maintenance of the underground stormwater management structures. The design and construction of the underground stormwater management facilities is complicated and will involve extensive design and permitting coordination with outside agencies.

Agency Coordination and Regulatory Approvals

An approved Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Summary Map (NRI/FSD) was on file for the property as part of the Germantown Library project (#4-01082). The NRI/FSD was updated to include the two residential stormwater management parcels to the east and west of the property and was approved for the park project on February 26, 2004.

This site is eligible for an exemption from forest conservation requirements, as part of the Town Sector zoning. The Germantown Library received an exemption from forest conservation requirements, and a revised exemption request was submitted as part of the park project and approved on November 19, 2004 (#4-05104E).

The stormwater management concept for the park was coordinated with the Germantown Library planning team, the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services with respect to developing a joint stormwater management concept. Under current agreements with the M-NCPPC, the DEP would be responsible for the structural maintenance of these facilities if they came under public ownership. The DEP's specific concerns and detailed design criteria were incorporated into the design of the facilities. The stormwater and wetland permitting agencies are satisfied with the current concept, and the stormwater management concept plan for the park was approved on July 28, 2004 (File # 212997).

Coordination with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) has occurred to allow construction of a retaining wall over the WSSC easement, provided that the M-NCPPC enters into a "Hold Harmless Agreement" with WSSC. The retaining wall is required to support a portion of an accessible route across the park. The agreement stipulates that WSSC has the right to remove park improvements to maintain the sewer without replacing them. As a result, the park project proposes a concrete encasement of the portion of the sewer line adjacent to proposed new park facilities. This will help protect the sewer line from damage, thus protecting park facilities from damage. If portions of the sewer line need to be replaced, the encasement acts as a sleeve that would allow the sewer to be replaced without disruption to surface facilities.

Land Acquisition

In order to consolidate the property ownership, this plan recommends that Montgomery County obtain ownership of the east and west residential stormwater management parcels

from the Germantown Town Center Homeowner's Association, provided that the Association would be willing to execute a deed for the property at no cost to the County. This would consolidate the ownership of all of the property under one public entity. The M-NCPPC would propose to enter into an agreement with the County to develop the park and maintain the park grounds and landscape. The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection would be responsible for the maintenance of the stormwater management structural facilities. These agreements would be similar to existing maintenance agreements on other County-owned parcels of parkland. A meeting was held on April 11, 2005 with the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) and the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Both agencies are in agreement with these recommendations, as indicated in minutes of the meeting included in Appendix F of the facility plan report. The DEP's agreement is contingent upon increases to their operating budget for maintenance of the new facilities.

Staff sent a letter to the Germantown Town Center Homeowner's Association on February 24, 2004, and subsequently met with Board of Directors on June 3, 2004 to discuss this proposal for the transfer of property. The conditions of site plan approval during the development process required that the developer dedicate the two stormwater management parcels to public open space, but did not specifically state that the land would be deeded to public ownership. Since the M-NCPPC does not typically develop and maintain private property for public use, the recommendation in this facility plan is dependent upon the transfer of the two stormwater management parcels to public ownership at no cost. The transfer of property is in the interest of the Association, because it relieves them entirely of maintenance responsibilities and liability for these stormwater management facilities.

The Germantown Town Center Homeowner's Association supports the development of the park and feels strongly that the recommendation should include placing both stormwater management facilities underground at the same time. Alternatively, if the development of the western stormwater management pond were to be recommended as a future phase, the Association would like a clear commitment as to the timing and funding of the future phase. The Association would also like assurances that the land would be dedicated for public open space, with no future development on the parcels. A letter from the Association, dated August 17, 2004, is included in Appendix C of the facility plan report.

COSTS AND PHASING

Construction Costs and Phasing

The proposed cost for Concept D, including design, permitting, construction and construction management costs is \$7,754,900. Project costs for the park are high, due significantly to the expense of creating level open space areas by reconstructing existing stormwater management facilities. Full funding for all proposed improvements to this park may not be forthcoming in any single funding cycle, and alternative funding sources, such as grant opportunities or public-private partnerships should be explored. A phasing strategy is described below that would spread expenditures over a longer timeframe.

This strategy is based on creating initial phases with enough significant public benefits to function as a "whole" park, even if the implementation of later phases is delayed. Ideally, the range of facilities to be provided in the early phases should be representative of what would be offered at build-out. The boundaries of the completed initial phases should not complicate the

completion of later phases. The initial phases should anticipate future utility of other needs and provide for the logical completion of the full program of planned improvements.

Conceptually, the first phases of construction would include the creation of the larger eastern, new open space area, by converting the storm water management facility from a dry pond to an underground system. The major east-west pedestrian link across the park would be constructed, with walls, pergola and overlook completed on the east side of the park, near the new open lawn. The new ornamental pond immediately below the overlook would also be installed along with the boardwalk across the center of the site, and an accessible route would be maintained to the west side of the park. Next phases would include walkways to the library parking lot on the west side of the park, along with the second pond. The overlook on the west side, promenade and smaller public spaces at the parking lot level would be proposed at this time but could be deferred until later phases, depending on available funding. Early phases would maintain the central part of the site as naturally occurring vegetation.

Final phases would include the creation of the new, western open space area by converting the existing stormwater management pond to an underground system. The remaining park facilities would be constructed, including the remainder of walkways and overlooks at the southern and western portions of the park site.

The north trail connection from the park through the stream valley to the terminus of the existing trail on Churchill East Homeowner's Association property was not studied or designed as part of the facility plan, because the Association did not originally support the project. The Association currently supports the connection, and an approximate cost estimate for this connection is included below. This is based on an assumption of approximately 1,000 linear feet of trail, with one bridge crossing of the stream, and 65 percent of the trail being constructed of boardwalk.

The proposed phased implementation strategy for Concept D with estimated costs is summarized below.

Year/ Phase	Description of Work	Expenditure
Year 1 Phase 1a	Resolve land acquisition issues, execute legal agreements, and begin construction documents for entire park.	\$505,750
Year 2 Phase 1a	Complete construction documents and permitting for entire park.	\$505,750
Year 3 Phase 1b	Construct underground stormwater management system for east area.	\$2,155,000
Year 4 Phase 1c	Construct east side park improvements, including walkways, lighting, pergola and stairs. Construct east and west ornamental ponds, boardwalks, landscaping, and permanent western connections to library parking lot. First Phase Park is Complete.	\$2,226,300
Year 5 Phase 2	Construct underground stormwater management system for west area and remaining park improvements, including remaining overlook areas, wetland plantings, and walkways and lighting at western and southern portions of park. Concept D Park is Complete.	\$2,362,100
Years 6 & 7 Phase 3	Facility Planning, Design and Construction of North Trail	\$765,000

Operating Costs

The M-NCPPC staff prepared an estimate of annual operating budget costs for Concept D, after all phases are constructed. This estimate includes input from the Northern Region Park Staff, the Northern Region Landscape Crew, Central Maintenance, Natural Resources, Environmental Planning, and Park Police. This estimate includes staff labor costs, contractor costs, equipment and materials costs, and estimated utility costs for water and electricity. The total estimated operating budget for this park is \$90,000-\$100,000 per year. Attachment C is a summary of the M-NCPPC's operating budget estimate.

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection also submitted an estimate of their operating budget requirements for Concept D. These operating costs are funded from their Water Quality Protection Charges. The estimated operating budget for maintenance of the two underground stormwater management facilities is \$71,000 per year. The cost of maintaining the two ponds in their current condition is estimated at \$10,000 per year, so this is a net increase in their operating costs of \$61,000 per year.

PARK CLASSIFICATION

This park was proposed in the 1989 Germantown Master Plan as a local park and is currently designated as a local park. Attachment D is a table of park classification definitions for local and urban parks from the July 1998 Park, Recreation, & Open Space (PROS) Master Plan, the current draft of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), as well as proposed revisions to the park classification definitions suggested by staff in the 2005 Planning Design Construction Operations (PDCO) Handbook for the park development process. Based on the park descriptions included in these documents, the Germantown Center Park should be classified as an urban park, due to its location, general size, and the types of facilities provided. Staff recommends changing the classification of the park from a local park to an urban park.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends approval of the facility plan Concept D and phasing strategy. The physical constraints of this site, regional stormwater functions and multiplicity of property ownership and control have left few options and have dictated a solution that weighs high development costs against the Planning Board's stated objectives of providing additional usable open space for the Town Center park and the surrounding community. This is the last major parcel of open space in the Town Center and an opportunity to redo missed opportunities and maximize remaining ones. The recommended alternative, Concept D, reflects the vision of the master plan. Concept D represents the best combination of preservation of existing natural features and reclamation and enhancement of stormwater management facilities, in order to create large usable areas for passive park use, interpretive opportunities, and an attractive focus for the Germantown Town Center.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Vicinity Plan
- Attachment B: Facility Plan Report
- Attachment C: M-NCPPC Operating Budget Estimate
- Attachment D: Park Classification Summary