MCPB
Item:
Date: 7/16/15

June 25, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks
Mitra Pedoeem, Acting Deputy Director of Parks
Michael Ma, Acting Chief, Park Development Division
Patricia McManus, Design Section Supervisor, Park Development Division

FROM: Lucas Bonney, Project Manager/Landscape Architect, 301-495-2572

SUBJECT: Facility Plan for the Renovation of Caroline Freeland Urban Park

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE the Recommended Facility Plan, including cost estimate.

Note: Forest conservation plan approval is not required, as this project received an exemption from forest conservation requirements on November 19, 2014.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to prepare a facility plan for the renovation of Caroline Freeland Urban Park located at 7200 Arlington Road in Bethesda, Maryland. Located at the intersection of Arlington Road and Elm Street, this small one-acre park is situated between the Edgemoor residential neighborhood and the west edge of the Downtown Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). Originally acquired in the late 1970's and constructed in 1983, the park was named for Caroline Freeland, the first female Chair of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Land uses adjacent to the park include the Bethesda Library to the north, the single family residential neighborhood of Edgemoor and Sidwell Friends 'Lower' School to the west, mixed-use retail/residential of the Downtown Bethesda CBD to the east, and mixed-use commercial and high-density residential to the south. Vehicular access through the park from Arlington Road to Hampden Lane is limited to emergency and maintenance vehicles.

The park was originally designed to buffer residential neighborhoods from commercial development and to provide passive recreation opportunities for downtown residents. The park now serves both the business community and the surrounding residential areas, since it provides an ideal setting for lunchtime meetings and weekend activities due to its close proximity to the Bethesda Library, local businesses, and restaurants.

Existing park elements include a fenced-in playground, a covered pavilion structure, an open-air trellis, a public art sculpture, a drinking fountain, raised wooden planter boxes, lawn area, stone pathways and plazas, and a variety of seating types. The playground area, which was renovated in 2010 and received $10,000 in donated funds from the community, features a variety of play equipment and is a popular destination for local residents. Pedestrian lighting was recently installed due to mounting safety concerns from local residents. The park also includes mature specimen trees and changes in grade, which are significant assets that contribute to the beauty and character of the park but also present challenges for accessibility and renovation. Although it has served the community well over the years, the park is deteriorating and facilities are in need of renovation. Low-branching evergreen trees and decayed raised wooden planters significantly restrict visibility into the park, and the overall path circulation and spatial relationships between park amenities are ineffective. Refer to Attachment A for the Facility Plan Report.

Existing Aerial Photo - Caroline Freeland Park

Project Funding

The facility planning study was funded with $350,000 from the FY 2013-2014 Capital Improvements Program in the Facility Planning: Local Parks PDF. Facility planning represents thirty percent (30%) complete construction documents, including a proposed design, cost estimate and determination of regulatory feasibility. Parker Rodriguez, Incorporated was hired

in May 2013 as the project's prime consultant, leading a team of sub-consultants that included VIKA (civil engineering, survey, natural resources inventory, forest conservation exemption, and stormwater management), MCLA (lighting design), and ECS Mid-Atlantic, LLC (geotechnical). If approved the project would be proposed for design and construction in the Fiscal Year 2017-2022 Capital Improvements Program (CIP.) The schedule of the project would be determined during review of the CIP.

Facility Planning Process

The facility planning process includes 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 and Forest Conservation Exemption.
4. Meet with the community to discuss existing concerns and ideas for the park.
5. Identify final program of requirements.
6. Prepare park design alternatives.
7. Present design alternatives to the community and stakeholders.
8. Develop preferred alternative based on input received.
9. Prepare stormwater management concept submission and obtain approval from the Department of Permitting Services.
10. Coordinate recommended plan with the community and stakeholders.
11. Finalize plan based on input received.
12. Coordinate any outstanding issues with stakeholder groups and regulatory agencies.
13. Prepare facility plan report, cost estimate, and operating budget estimates.
14. Present facility plan recommendations and costs to the Montgomery County Planning Board for approval.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Bethesda Downtown Plan Staff Draft, May 2015

The Bethesda Downtown Plan project has been running concurrently with the Caroline Freeland Park facility plan process. Although formal Master Plan recommendations have not yet been finalized, park staff has coordinated with planning staff to identify preliminary recommendations that may affect or influence the facility plan recommendations and future renovation. The following draft recommendations have been provided by the Planning Department. First, Arlington Road is projected to be reconfigured to reduce roadway lane widths in order to accommodate the creation of bike lanes. The existing location of the curbs along Arlington Road would not be modified within vicinity of the park, and therefore would not affect the proposed facility plan improvements. Second, the master plan recommends the acquisition of residential Lot 6, which adjoins the park's western boundary at the terminus of Hampden Lane. If acquired for parkland in the future, the land may be used as an extension of play areas, planted buffers, and may accommodate requested accessible parking.

Bethesda Central Business District (CBD) Sector Plan, Approved and Adopted July 1994

Caroline Freeland Urban Park is located within the Edgemoor Transition Area along the western edge of the Sector Plan Boundary (Refer to Sector Plan Area Map, Figure 2.3 and Districts Map, Figure 4.4). The plan includes a number of general recommendations to improve pedestrian connectivity, streetscape, and to maintain the buffer function of parks located in the outer network of CBD park spaces. The context and function of Caroline Freeland Urban Park is referenced as follows (page 138; Figure 4.40, page 140):

> *The Edgemoor Transition Area consists primarily of public institutional and recreational facilities, which form a stable transitional land use between the single-family residential Edgemoor neighborhood to the west and the high-density Transit Station Residential District to the east of Arlington Road…the existing stable uses include the Bethesda Elementary School, the Montgomery County Library, and a one-acre M-NCPPC Park. The location of these public facilities reflects implementation of the 1970 Master Plan recommendations, confirmed by the 1976 Sector Plan, that the entire west side frontage of Arlington Road between Wilson Lane and Elm Street be acquired for public use.*

The park is situated along major vehicular and pedestrian routes. Figures 3.7 and 4.41 indicate Arlington Road as a primary vehicular & primary pedestrian route. Elm Street and Hampden Lane along the north and south perimeter of the park are considered local pedestrian routes.

The plan provides specific streetscape recommendations for Arlington Road and general recommendations for additional sidewalks in the Edgemoor Transition Area. In general, the plan stressed the importance of streetscape design. The streetscape plan (Figure 6.1, Page 188) designates Arlington Road as a proposed main street, which includes undergrounding of utilities and use of specific paving materials, lighting types, and street trees. The plan provides the following recommendations:

- Sidewalk Paving – Bethesda brick paver currently specified in the approved 1984 Bethesda Streetscape Plan for Arlington Road (Refer to Paving Plan - Figure 6.3, page 191).
- Street Lighting – Washington Globe Lights, “Acorn” globe fixture mounted on a 16-foot pole (Refer to Street Lighting Plan - Figure 6.4, page 193).
- Street Tree Planting – The plan specifies Red Oak species for Arlington Road (Refer to Street Tree Plan – Figure 6.5, page 194).
- For Transition Area streetscapes (page 200) – “Install standard concrete sidewalks along all residential streets that connect to the CBD; Plant street trees.”

The plan also provided a phased approach for implementing streetscape improvements, from Priorities 1 to 5. The plan assigned a Priority 5 (lowest priority) to the recommended streetscape implementation along Arlington Road (Page 201).

The Draft Bethesda Downtown Plan that was mentioned earlier in this report is currently recommending the acquisition of Lot 6, which is located at the park’s northwest corner (south of Hampden Lane). The 1994 Sector Plan also mentions this specific property, stating on page 139, *“The Plan recommends deleting Lot 6 from the Sector Plan area at the point where Hampden Lane terminates at the M-NCPPC park. The lot was not acquired at the time the park was created and remains part of the Edgemoor neighborhood.”*

Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, Approved and Adopted March 2005

The Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan was developed with the goal of providing connectivity to major park destinations and the major park trail corridors. Caroline Freeland Urban Park is located less than ¼ mile from the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT), which is an extension of the Georgetown Branch Trail (GBT). Figure 2-4 on page 31 of the plan identifies a proposed Bike Lane to run along Elm Street (BL-7), which defines the park's southern edge, and is planned to connect directly to the Bethesda Metrorail station. Patrons traveling from the park can access the CCT, GBT, and the countywide bikeway and park trail system by using a combination of proposed Bike Lanes BL-7 (Elm Street) and BL-6 (Woodmont Avenue). The BL-6 and BL-7 routes are described on pages 46 (Table 2-2) and summarized below.

- Route BL-7, proposed bike lane connection between Exeter Road and Wisconsin Avenue (MD355). This on-road bike lane (formerly called Class II Bikeway) is intended to provide a direct connection to the Bethesda Metrorail Station.

- Route BL-6, proposed bike lane connection between Bethesda Avenue and Battery Lane. This on-road bike lane (formerly called Class II Bikeway) is intended to provide important connections to the Bethesda CBD and Metrorail Station, NIH, Medical Center Metrorail Station, and the Capital Crescent Trail.

Vision 2030: Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation, Montgomery County, Maryland

Vision 2030 is a strategic plan for park and recreation services in Montgomery County for the next twenty years. The final plan, dated June 2011, shows Caroline Freeland Urban Park located in the South Central planning area. Volume 2 of the final draft (page 63) indicates that the South Central area has the lowest level of service of all planning areas for parks and recreation compared to the density of population, even though this area shows a relatively high concentration and access to recreational facilities.

In the table on page 75 (Appendix E), 2010 survey results from the South Central planning area show increasing demand and need to maintain high levels of service for playgrounds, community gardens, dog parks, and picnic shelters. In addition, there is strategic potential to add skate park elements.

2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan

Building on the findings of the Vision 2030 Plan, the 2012 PROS Plan provides strategies and priorities for delivering the right kinds of services and facilities in the most effective locations.

The PROS Plan included new guidelines for urban parks, based on objectives approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board in 2010. Caroline Freeland Park is considered an urban buffer park, and depending on its size and context, should strive to include the following function and site amenities (page 16):

> *Serve as green buffers at the edges of urban, high density development adjacent to lower density residential areas (¼ acre minimum). They provide a green space within which residents and workers of an urban area may relax and recreate. Typical Park Facilities (not all-inclusive) include landscaping, sitting/picnic areas, play equipment, courts and shelters.*

The PROS Plan also provides specific needs analysis for facilities suitable in urban parks (Chapter 3 – Recreation and Parks). The *Countywide Inventory, Future Needs and Service Delivery Strategies* (Figure 8, Pages 36-39), indicates that where the level of service per population is lowest, consider providing: dog spots, community gardens, skate spots, community open space, and urban wooded areas. Regarding recreation, on page 60 (Figure 10 - *Future Recreation Needs for the Year 2022 by Planning Area)* the analysis indicates that there is no need for new recreation facilities (playgrounds, tennis courts, or basketball courts) within Planning Area 35 (Bethesda).

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Bethesda downtown area offers several urban amenities, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, and green urban parks along the edges of the CBD. Within a one-mile radius of Caroline Freeland Urban Park, the Montgomery County Department of Parks owns and operates four additional urban parks (Elm Street, Battery Lane, Cheltenham Drive, and Chase Avenue). These small urban parks offer similar amenities to that of Caroline Freeland, and all are located within the buffer/transition areas between residential and downtown commercial uses. In addition, there are two local parks, two neighborhood parks, the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Trail located within this same one-mile radius of Caroline Freeland Park.

The park currently offers functional program elements that are consistent with other urban parks in the area, however, the efficiency of these spaces and elements could be significantly improved. Overall, the existing park spaces are fragmented and do not promote flexible use. Stone and concrete pathways are provided in between these fragmented pieces, resulting in an overall disjointed circulation. The existing playground area is heavily used and appropriately sited at the park's highpoint, away from the Arlington Road traffic and noise. Mature shade trees are also at the park's highpoint adjacent to the playground, offering shaded seating areas. The park is approachable from all four corners, although they could be made more inviting, visible, universally accessible, and better engaged with the adjacent streetscapes. Site furnishings are in need of upgrading and park structures pose ongoing maintenance and use challenges. A full assessment of existing conditions is included in the Facility Plan Report.

PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS

Preliminary Program Elements and Community Outreach – Meeting #1

A meeting was held with the community on November 6, 2013 to obtain public input and ideas for the renovation of the park. The goal of this first meeting was to present the site analysis and to seek input on the preliminary program for the park. Community feedback was obtained through two means: a written questionnaire and a visual preference exercise. The questionnaires included seven questions about the character and uses of the existing park and also aspirations for the park in the future. The visual preference exercise was comprised of a series of photo boards with site elements, materials, and landscape types. Participants were asked to signify their preference of a particular feature by applying a green dot ("like") or red dot ("dislike").

The visual preference survey yielded preferences for traditional park-like materials and features, such as seating under trees, seating assembled for social interaction, alternative seating types (low walls), inviting lawn areas with topographic interest (for sitting), and custom / interactive

playground features and materials. The questionnaire produced the most discussion and feedback, which is summarized below. A complete record of the meeting minutes, questionnaire, and visual preference survey feedback is included in the facility plan report appendices.

The best thing about the park today:

- Playground with fence.
- Buffer for adjacent residences.
- Mature trees and green space within highly urbanized area.
- Pedestrian-oriented passage to the CBD and local neighborhood.
- Passive recreation: sitting, resting, quiet conversation, lunch eating, and meeting with friends.

The worst thing about the park today:

- Park layout is confusing, wasteful, and without a clear focal point.
- After hours use – illicit behavior and substance abuse, perceived as unsafe at night.
- Covered pavilion structure shelter attracts homeless and encourages sleeping.
- Lack of separation between play areas and busy roadways.
- Deteriorating park elements, such as the raised wood planters.

Interests and preferences for the renovated park:

- Playground area enhancement and expansion with increased variety of play.
- Removal of covered pavilion and raised planters.
- Variety of seating types.
- Better use of Hampden Lane.
- Arlington Road streetscape and safety improvements.
- Park design to better integrate and connect uses.
- Tree preservation, additional shade and flowering trees.
- Improved function of green space / grassy areas.
- Improved pathway circulation.
- Low lighting at night for safety.
- Relocation of existing sculpture on site.
- Public art enhancements.
- Improved site furnishings and bike racks.

A preliminary program of requirements was developed by park staff and was presented during the community meeting. The program was based on the analysis of existing park facilities, surrounding conditions, policy guidance, and duplication of service. The following facilities were initially recommended to be included in the park: community open space; playground; community garden; skate elements; streetscape elements along Arlington Road; and bikeway and sidewalk improvements.

Overall, there seemed to be a fairly strong community consensus on the elements and features to include and not include in the park's renovation, with some areas of mixed reaction. Of the specific program elements presented, there was moderate opposition to skate elements and community gardens. Although not recommended in the preliminary program, a dog park was mentioned as unfavorable and inappropriate for a park of this size.

The community garden was removed from consideration, since there was no desire expressed by the community. In addition, community gardens require ample sunlight and open space, which was infeasible considering the spatial requirements of the other program elements.

Formal skate elements were not included in the program due to spatial restrictions and proximity to residences and the Bethesda Library reading room, however there are opportunities for informal skating within the park and along the perimeter streetscape.

Final Program Elements

A final program of requirements was developed for the park based on input received from the community, guidance from master plans, and input from staff.

- **Playground** – increase the size of play area, the number of play offerings for multiple age groups, and the uniqueness of play elements for long-term sustained interest. Maintain fencing around the playground and consider increasing shade opportunities.
- **Community Open Space** – provide a flexible, multi-purpose, and functional open space that is community-oriented and establishes a clear focal point for the park.
- **Seating / General Site Furnishings** – provide a wide array of seating types for single use to group interactions as desired. Improve the condition, quality, and locations of seating elements and site furnishings (including drinking fountain, bicycle parking, and trash receptacles).
- **Pathway Improvements** – provide an efficient, pleasant, and clearly delineated pedestrian-oriented pathway system in the park that is accessible, integrated with park entrances, and improves pedestrian circulation within and through the park.
- **Streetscape Improvements** – provide a safer and more pleasant streetscape environment along Arlington Road by increasing the vegetative separation from the more active areas of the park. Renovate Hampden Lane to be more inviting and attractive.
- **Landscape Buffer** – Maintain the park's original function as a buffer between the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods by enhancing the vegetative buffer along the west park boundary and increasing the overall plantings within the park, while ensuring compliance with security operations and visibility concerns.
- **Site Lighting** – Improve the effectiveness of site lighting for security purposes. After hours use by teenagers engaging in illicit activities is an ongoing concern especially for residents within close proximity of the park. Improve visibility through the park by removing raised planters and select evergreen trees to improve policing operations.
- **Tree Preservation** – Maintain and enhance existing mature trees within the park as they are increasingly important in a highly urbanized area.
- **Existing Sculpture** – preserve the existing sculpture, but consider modifying its location to better integrate it with the new park design. Consider integrating additional artistic elements throughout the park.
- **Additional Considerations:**
    - Stormwater Management - Attractive and well-integrated stormwater management features that maximize treatment of runoff.
    - Educational or interpretive features.

PLAN ALTERNATIVES

Three alternative concept plans were developed based on the feedback received during the first community meeting. Each concept preserved the function of the park as a green space buffer, preserved the mature deciduous tree canopy to the south, maintained the popular playground area along the west boundary, suggested new locations for the existing sculpture, re-configured the Hampden Lane access, upgraded the perimeter streetscape, and integrated required stormwater management features. Each plan suggested a different layout that preserved these core features, while enhancing overall visibility, accessibility, circulation, effectiveness of park elements, and efficiency and flexibility for programming of spaces.

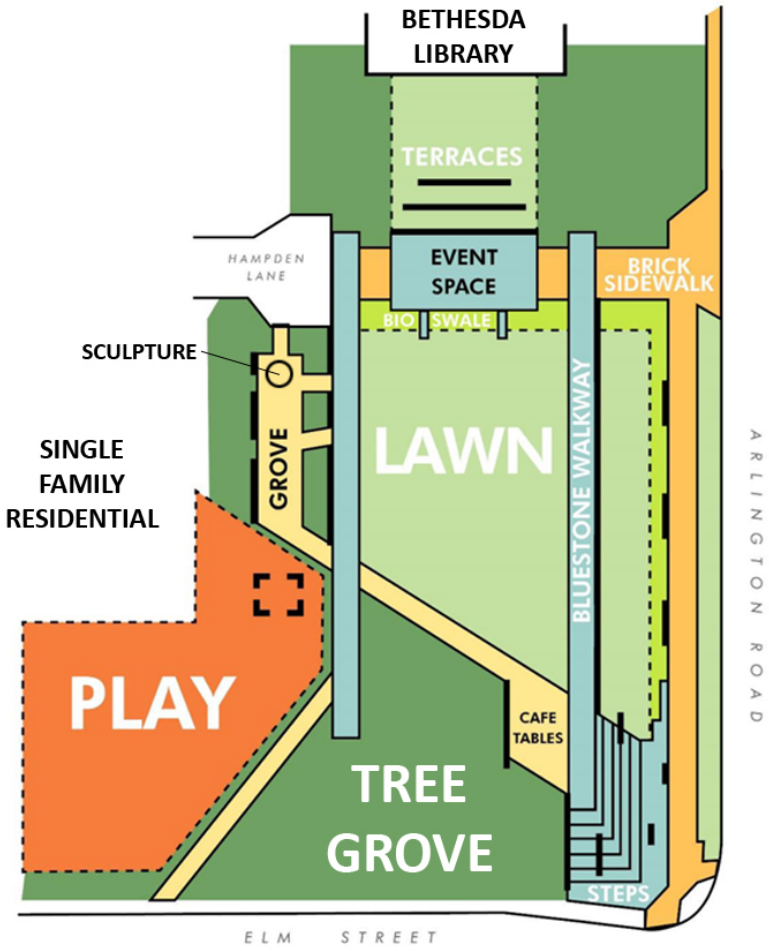
A brief description of each alternative is outlined below.

OPTION A - Concept Diagram

- Option A configured pathways into direct pedestrian desire lines that connected the corners of the park and provided clear delineation of the Lawn, Tree Grove, and Play programmatic areas. This option suggested the largest increase to the existing fenced-in playground area, and included the re-located sculpture at its entrance. The main park entrance at Arlington Road & Elm Street featured a series of stone steps, seat walls, and terraces leading up to a paved plaza with flexible seating overlooking the central lawn. Hampden Lane was re-configured as a flexible use area for events with seating terraces descending from Bethesda Library's south façade.

OPTION B - Concept Diagram

- Option B configured pathways into sinuous curvilinear forms while addressing pedestrian desire lines and a clear delineation between the Lawn, Tree Grove, and Play programmatic areas. This option suggested expansion of the existing boulder wall through the site, reinforcing pedestrian corridors and wedges of different types of spaces in order to reference the large-scale planning principles of the On Wedges and Corridors General Plan for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, developed during Caroline Freeland's tenure as a M-NCPPC Commissioner in 1964 and updated during her tenure as Commission Chair in 1969. The boulder wall was intended to unify the site, providing the re-located sculpture at its terminus. This option also suggested the least amount of change to the fenced-in playground area footprint. The main park entrance steps, ledges, and seat walls at Arlington Road & Elm Street received a more compact layout leading up to the central lawn and the boulder wall. Hampden Lane featured a more traditional layout and suggested an elevated stage deck facing south to the main lawn area.



OPTION C - Concept Diagram

- Option C configured pathways into a strong north-south geometry that intended to connect visually with the Bethesda Library and strongly define each park space, while accommodating pedestrian movements diagonally across the site. The existing sculpture was re-located and incorporated into a sculpture garden and seating area that also functioned to bolster the vegetated buffer along the residential edge. The fenced-in playground area received a moderate expansion. This option also suggested expansion of the existing boulder wall in select areas. The main park entrance at Arlington Road & Elm Street featured the most generous layout of stone steps and seat walls leading up to a paved plaza with flexible seating overlooking the central lawn. Hampden Lane featured a flexible use area for events with seating terraces descending from Bethesda Library's south façade, similar to Option A.

Plan Alternatives Development and Community Outreach – Meeting #2

The second public meeting was held with the community on March 12, 2014 to present the design alternatives for public feedback. This second community meeting was primarily attended by residents of the Edgemoor neighborhood. Community feedback was obtained through more traditional means at this venue, which included group discussion and opportunities for participants to hand write comments on each Option that was presented. Following each community meeting, participants were encouraged to review materials provided at the meeting and posted on the project website and to follow-up with the project manager with written comments and correspondence. The following is a brief summary of the feedback received during and following Community Meeting #2:

- General locations and function of the main lawn area, playground, and existing preserved tree grove were accepted, however, sizing and proximity to roadways were debated.
- Playground expansion was supported to a degree, but not at the expense of the residential buffer bordering the park. Playground elements should attract broad age groups.
- Path circulation was accepted, with preference for the curvilinear.
- Café seating (movable) and plaza area ideas were supported, considering that they provide shade and are located with enough separation from roadways.
- Accessibility at the main Arlington & Elm entrance was raised as a concern.
- Varieties of seating types were supported (traditional and non-traditional).
- Re-located sculpture ideas were generally supported; however, the future location should consider maintaining its prominence in the park.
- The park's buffer from adjacent residential properties should be strengthened.
- Park capacity and future use of the park was raised.
- New art opportunities should be explored and incorporated in the design.

There were preferences expressed for park features presented in both Options B and C, including some minor aspects of Option A. Staff documented all community feedback from both Community Meetings 1 and 2, including comments from internal staff reviews, to develop a clear set of design components for assimilation into a recommended plan. Option A contributed appropriately-scaled entry steps and a plaza seating area that was separated from Arlington Road and centrally located next to the main lawn and existing tree shade. Option B contributed the boulder wall concept and the idea of a curvilinear path that referenced Caroline Freeland's professional legacy. Option C contributed strong delineations of park spaces, a moderately expanded playground area, and a desirable separation between internal active park areas and Arlington Road. In addition, all options suggested a flat usable green space and a re-configured Hampden Lane that maintains current emergency access. An accessible ramp would also be incorporated into the main entrance design at the corner of Arlington Road and Elm Street.

Following Community Meeting #2, staff received additional feedback from residents through e-mail. Several property owners that live directly adjacent to the park voiced strong opposition to the notion of a stage for performances or large events, as this would be an inappropriate use for a small park that is intended to buffer residences from the downtown CBD and that is also located directly adjacent to the Bethesda Library's "quiet reading" room. Staff agreed to remove a formal stage from the recommended plan.

Additional Community Outreach – Presentation to the Edgemoor Citizens Association

During Community Meeting #2, residents requested a follow-up meeting to present the recommended plan to the Edgemoor Citizens Association (ECA). Staff attended the ECA meeting on January 20, 2015 to present the recommended plan. Following the meeting, staff provided multiple copies of the proposed plan to attendees and posted the information on the project website. Staff provided ECA members with a one-month timeframe to review the plan, during which time various email comments were received and a few site walks with ECA members were conducted. Comments received during this period were consistent with the nature and content of comments provided during the previous community meetings. Comments included the following: 1) Seating type and function should address use by different age groups and game activities; 2) There is after-hours illicit behavior and trash thrown over the adjacent residential fence; 3) The proposed plan should reflect the original function to serve as a buffer for the neighborhood; 4) Concerns were expressed regarding relocation details of the sculpture; 6) There was a request to preserve the setting of a mural painted on the wall of an adjacent property; 7) Ensure that the maintenance and design of the vegetative buffer and new benches will deter homeless activity; 8) Address potential conflicts where the Hampden Lane park entrance intersects with the adjacent Lot 6 driveway; and 9) Lighting should support security while not inviting additional nighttime use of the park.

Additional Coordination and Regulatory Approvals

Commission on People with Disabilities (CPWD)
Staff presented the project to the Commission on People with Disabilities on October 8, 2014. The CPWD recommended that the accessible ramp at the main park entrance should be better integrated with the design and more visible to potential users. This revision was incorporated into the final design. The Commission also requested that accessible parking spaces be provided adjacent to the park. Staff coordinated this request with the Montgomery County Departments of Transportation and Fire & Rescue Services, which responded that there was not enough available space on Elm Street or at Hampden Lane.

Development Review Committee (DRC)
Staff presented the project to the Development Review Committee on January 20, 2015. The DRC was generally supportive of the proposed plan. Agencies that provided comments are listed below.

M-NCPPC Planning Department – Area 1
Staff provided comments on specific site design details, compliance with Bethesda streetscape standards, tree preservation, public art coordination, and reduction of impervious surfaces. Draft recommendations from the Bethesda Downtown Plan were mentioned and have been addressed in other sections of this report.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MC-DOT), Traffic Engineering and Operations Division
Staff submitted design materials for review for the proposed streetscape improvements along Arlington Road, Elm Street, and each end of Hampden Lane. Streetscape dimensions and materials were consistent with Bethesda Downtown Streetscape Standards. MC-DOT staff provided comments during the DRC discussion on January 20, 2015. Comments included accommodating future on-street bicycle facilities, Hampden Lane emergency access design dimensions and bollard placement, streetscape design and future maintenance, and bus stop requirements. Regarding parking, MCDOT did not support our request to add parallel parking

along Elm Street or accessible parking near the neighborhood terminus of Hampden Lane. Plans were revised to incorporate these comments.

Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS)
The stormwater management concept plan for the park was approved on March 30, 2015 (SM File #269675). DPS Staff from the Land Development Division will need to review proposed streetscape, tree planting and lighting work within the public right-of-way during the final design phase of the project. During initial review of the project at the DRC meeting, DPS right-of-way staff did not have any objection to the proposed streetscape design, and noted a requirement to maintain 5'-0" width clearance within the proposed sidewalk.

Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MC-FRS)
MC-FRS was concerned about maintaining the use of Hampden Lane for emergency services and that the paving material, width and driveway openings would support emergency vehicle access, loading and turning radius requirements. The project emergency access plan was approved in a letter dated April 15, 2015.

M-NCPPC Planning Department / Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
The Forest Conservation Exemption Plan was approved on November 19, 2014 (File #42014083E).

Potomac Electric and Power Company (PEPCO)
Staff submitted a concept plan to PEPCO and requested information on the feasibility and cost of removing utility poles along the park frontage at Arlington Road. PEPCO provided preliminary approval of the plan in a letter dated January 6, 2015, which also included an estimated cost associated with undergrounding the overhead lines. PEPCO estimated the cost at approximately $500,000 - $750,000. Further coordination with a private utilities consultant yielded an estimate of approximately one million dollars to underground these same lines, depending on the configuration of pole relocation work. This amount did not factor in the additional telecommunication lines located below the PEPCO lines on the same regional trunk line. Re-location of these additional telecommunication lines would cost approximately $400,000, bringing the cumulative total to approximately $1.4 million dollars. Due to the high estimated cost, staff did not include this proposal in the recommended plan. The project includes underground conduit in the cost estimate, in order to provide the opportunity to relocate lines underground in the future with minimal disruption to the new streetscape improvements.

Public Arts Trust Steering Committee - Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC)
On January 26, 2015, staff presented proposed ideas for public art. Given the park's important location in the neighborhood close to the Bethesda Downtown CBD, high level of use and high public visibility, the Public Arts Trust Steering Committee supported the inclusion of public art in this project and the relocation of the existing sculpture to be better integrated with the new design. The committee recommended that new artwork should be integrated with the infrastructure of the park (e.g. stone engraved paving, boulder wall, lighting, fencing, etc.) since the park already has a sculptural component.

Washington Gas
Plans were coordinated with Washington Gas, which provided a letter on January 23, 2015 identifying potential conflicts with existing gas facilities. The letter outlined the minimum soil coverage over their utilities and requested that test pit data be provided to complete their

feasibility review. Staff will perform the test pits and coordinate work during the final design phase of the project.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)
WSSC reviewed the plan and provided preliminary approval of the plan in a letter dated November 19, 2014.

Verizon
Verizon provided preliminary review and approval of the park plans via e-mail on December 24, 2014. They also included a basic study of the cost and work associated with undergrounding their utilities within the project limits.

M-NCPPC Department of Parks
Staff reviewed the Department's lighting policy for urban parks with senior management on October 20, 2014 and received direction to maintain the current levels of lighting on site for security purposes. Based on current park policy, parks are closed between dusk and dawn, although it is recognized that urban parks have a nighttime context and require lighting for safe passage and security at night. If the lighting and use policy for urban parks were to be modified in the future, lighting plans could be revisited during the final design phase of the project.

RECOMMENDED FACILITY PLAN

The Recommended Facility Plan for Caroline Freeland Urban Park seeks to enhance the existing features that are integral to this buffer park, while balancing the increasing need for downtown urban park features that promote social interactions and passive recreation. This plan intends to protect and enhance the existing tree canopy on site and to create a flexible framework for multi-purpose activities. The renewed park preserves the existing features of the park that give it its identity while suggesting simple improvements to increase efficiency, function, and enjoyment of the park space. The recommended plan incorporates these principles in the following park spaces.

- *Park Entrances* - provide fully accessible park entrances at all four corners of the park. Transform the main entrance from the Downtown Bethesda CBD into a welcoming urban gateway and meeting place. Stone steps, seat walls, and broad terraces at this corner entrance will provide a flexible spot for patrons to sit, interact, and enjoy the urban setting.

- *Arlington Road Streetscape* – enhance the safety and experience of the perimeter streetscapes of Arlington Road and Elm Street, complying with Bethesda Streetscape Standards.

- *Hampden Lane Promenade* – Transform Hampden Lane into a pedestrian-oriented plaza space that maintains required emergency vehicle access. This paved flexible area also has the potential to accommodate future community activities and use.

- *Residential Buffer* – improve the vegetative buffer along the residential edge, while ensuring visibility for policing needs.

- *Main Lawn* – provide a flat, multi-purpose, and functional open space that is community-oriented and establishes a clear focal point for activities within the park. By situating this multi-purpose open space adjacent to the moveable seating area in The Grove to the south, park patrons will be presented with more options to enjoy the park.

- *The Grove* – preserve and enhance the existing tree canopy and shaded areas of the park, while integrating seating for enhanced interest. Movable seating elements will be introduced to maximize interactions among visitors.

- *The Rockery* – provide a unique park feature that unifies park spaces and provides an indelible memory for residents and visitors alike. This sinuous line of boulders will function as a retaining wall, an alternative seating type, and an integrated backdrop for the re-located sculpture.

- *The Playground* – expand the fenced-in play area to provide play opportunities for multiple age groups and enhance the uniqueness of play elements for sustained interest.

- *General Site Furnishings & Amenities* – provide a wide array of seating types and improve the condition, quality, and locations of site furnishings (including drinking fountain, bicycle parking, and trash and recycling receptacles).

- *Site Lighting* – provide improved lighting for safe passage through the park at night.

- *Stormwater Management* – treat stormwater runoff using micro-bioretention and rain garden applications and enhance awareness of environmental processes through educational interpretation.

COST ESTIMATES

Construction Costs

A summary of construction costs is outlined in the table below. A detailed cost estimate is included in the appendices of the facility plan report.

Item	Subtotal
Site Preparation & Demolition	$170,500
Tree Care	$66,900
Erosion & Sediment Control	$70,000
Earthwork	$49,700
Stormwater Management	$75,900
Structures (re-located sculpture)	$50,000
Vehicular Pavement (Hampden Lane)	$89,650
Hardscape Materials (Paving, Walls, Steps, Streetscape)	$579,850
Utilities & Site Lighting	$244,300
Playground	$489,400
Furnishings, Site Amenities, and Public Art	$275,700
Landscaping, Micro-bioretention Plants, and Maintenance	$223,200
Construction Subtotal	**$2,385,100**
Construction Contingency (30% of Construction Subtotal)	$715,530
Construction Total (Subtotal plus Contingency)	**$3,100,630**
Design Contract with Contingency (15% of Construction Total)	$465,100
Staff Chargebacks for Design (20% of Design Contract)	$93,000
Construction Management & Inspections (4% of Construction Total)	$124,000
As-built Drawings	$15,000
Electronic Submission of Submittals	$10,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	**$3,807,730**

Operating Budget Impact

The operating budget impact (OBI) is projected to increase by $16,000 annually, based on the addition of three new stormwater management facilities and additional planting material.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends approval of the facility plan and associated cost estimate. The proposed plan provides a more functional, efficient and flexible urban space that will continue to be valued by local residents, business owners, and visitors over time and can accommodate changing programmatic needs in the future. The proposed plan also enhances the existing park features that support its buffer function and suggests simple modifications in response to its increasingly urban context.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Facility Plan Report
Attachment 2: Appendices