Chevy Chase Open Space Urban Park - Developing a Vision

Agenda

7:00 Welcome & presentation
7:30 Brainstorming session
8:45 Wrap Up
9:00 Adjourn
**Background**

Two-acre site located within Chevy Chase Village and adjacent to Friendship Heights CBD

- Former single-family home
- Former part-time landscape business retail use
- Also partially located within the District of Columbia in the Western Avenue right-of-way

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**Background**

- **2002**
  Legacy Open Space Program acquisition as Urban Open Space
  - Partnership with Chevy Chase Village based on inter-governmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- **2007**
  Parks Department assumes responsibility for property
- **2009**
  Buildings and driveway demolished
Why are we here tonight?

Purpose of this Concept Planning Process

- Inform the broader community about the opening and clean-up of this new urban park
- Gather input from the community to develop a VISION for this new urban park and to understand the issues of concern about any new development with the urban park
- Develop design Concept and Program of Requirements (POR) necessary to move forward with:
  - Interim Improvement Plan
  - Facility Planning and Final Design/Construction through capital budget (CIP)

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Three-Phase Park Implementation

Phase I: Site Cleanup

- Building Demolition, 2009
- NNI & hazardous vegetation removal, underway
- Signage & security

Phase II: Interim Improvement Plan

- Interim, low-cost improvements to create safe, usable park between now and ultimate build-out
- Coordinated with Concept Plan to ensure long-term compatibility

Phase III: Implementation of full Concept Plan

- Normal CIP process: Facility Planning, then Final Design/Construction through CIP
- Could be done in phases to implement amenities as funds are identified
Phase I: Site Cleanup

Tree & Vegetation Survey

- Goals for site cleanup
  - Improve visibility and safety in the park
  - Remove undesirable and invasive plant species per Park policy
  - Remove dead, dying and hazardous trees and tree limbs
  - Preserving the majority of the beautiful plants throughout the park

M-NCPPC Department of Parks Mission

“Protect and interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources; balance the demand for recreation with the need for conservation; offer a variety of enjoyable recreational activities that encourage healthy lifestyles; and provide clean, safe, and accessible places for leisure-time activities.”

STEWARDSHIP

“Manage the county park system so it best meets the needs of current and future generations”

RECREATION

“Offer a range of leisure activities that strengthen the body, sharpen the mind, and renew the spirit”
Countywide Park System

The Park Classification System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARK TYPE</th>
<th>PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TYPICAL FACILITIES*</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE SIZE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUNTYWIDE PARKS – Parks in this category serve all residents of Montgomery County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Parks</td>
<td>Large Parks that present a wide range of recreational opportunities and retain 20% or more of the acreage as conservation areas.</td>
<td>Playfields, athletic fields, golf courses, woodland, water-oriented recreation areas.</td>
<td>200 acres or more</td>
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<td>Recreational Areas</td>
<td>Parks larger than 50 acres in size that are more extensively developed than Regional Parks, but may also contain natural areas.</td>
<td>Athletic fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts, park and playground areas, golf course, trails, natural areas,</td>
<td>50 acres or more</td>
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<td>Special Parks</td>
<td>These parks include areas that contain features of historic and natural significance.</td>
<td>Very, but may include agricultural centers, gardens, small conference centers, historic structures, etc.</td>
<td>Varies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Based Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Parks</td>
<td>Very small parks, serving highly urban areas.</td>
<td>Landscaping, playfields, areas, play equipment, courts, and shelters.</td>
<td>1 Acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Parks</td>
<td>Small parks providing informal recreation in residential areas.</td>
<td>Play equipment, play field, walking area, shelter, tennis and multi-use courts. (Does not include regulation size ballfields).</td>
<td>2.5 Acre</td>
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<td>Local Parks</td>
<td>Larger parks that provide ballfields and both programmed and unprogrammed recreation facilities.</td>
<td>Ballfields, play equipment, tennis and multi-use courts, playfield, area, shelters, buildings and other facilities.</td>
<td>15 Acre</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Conservation Areas</td>
<td>Smaller parks of conservation-oriented parcels located in residential areas, generally dedicated at the time of subdivision.</td>
<td>Generally undeveloped, may include a storm water management pond and related facilities.</td>
<td>Varies</td>
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Chevy Chase
Open Space
Urban Park

Recreation Needs Estimated by Geographic Areas*

Planning Area Geography
2020 Needs estimated using M-NCPPC PROS Plan Methodology

- Playgrounds
- Basketball Courts
- Tennis Courts

Community Based Geography
2020 Needs estimated using M-NCPPC PROS Plan Methodology and ball field permit data

- All Fields ....
- Youth Diamonds
- Multi-purpose Diamonds
- Baseball 90’ Baseline
- Youth rectangular
- Multi-purpose rectangular

Countywide Geography
2020 Needs based on State Planning Participation Based Model, Park & Trail Plans & Fairfax County model

- Picnic Shelters
- Dog Exercise Areas
- Roller Hockey Courts
- Skate Parks
- Trails
- Nature Centers
- Community Recreation Centers
- Aquatic Facilities
- Natural Areas

* Source: 2005 LPPRP (PROS) Plan
Public Policy Framework

LPPRP (PROS)

- Estimated needs for active recreation facilities, Bethesda-Chevy Chase planning area
  - Large diamond fields (baseball): 4.8
  - Adult rectangular fields: 20.4
  - Tennis courts: 0
  - Basketball courts: 0
  - Playgrounds: 0
- Appropriateness of needed facilities for Chevy Chase Open Space Urban Park
  - Site too small for adult athletic fields
  - No on-site parking

Public Policy Framework

Vision 2030

- Top facilities/amenities/programs to expand or improve
  - Playgrounds
  - Trails and trail connectivity
  - Dog parks
  - Community events and festivals
  - Community gardens
  - Picnic Shelters
  - Exercise and fitness
Public Policy Framework

Vision 2030

- Two action items relevant to Chevy Chase Open Space
  - Plan, design and create more un-programmed, flexible park and recreation spaces
  - Incorporate nature and environmental education into the playground environment

Due to the size and diversity of the County, the Vision 2030 process projected park and recreation needs in four geographic sub-areas of the County: Potomac/Rural, East Transit Corridor, South Central, and North Central.

The Level of Service (LOS) analysis of the parks and recreation inventory shows that when population density is considered, the current overall Level of Service per capita is lower in the I-270 corridor (indicated by the lighter shades in the South Central and North Central sub-areas on this map).

The increased growth projected in the next twenty years along the I-270 corridor will create increased demand for parks and recreation facilities and services.
Public Policy Framework

Legacy Open Space

- *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (2001)*
  - Overall goal of Legacy Open Space plan to preserve green space for all communities in the County, including urban
  - Chevy Chase Open Space identified as an Urban Open Space as an undeveloped site adjacent to a CBD

Public Policy Framework

Regulatory & Inter-jurisdictional Issues

- **Montgomery County and State of Maryland Regulations**
  - Environmental Regulations (Forest Conservation, Stormwater Management, etc.)
  - Environmental Site Design
  - Americans with Disabilities Act

- **District of Columbia Department of Transportation R.O.W.**
  - A 25’ strip between park property line and Western Avenue sidewalk is in the District
  - Strip is the Commission’s responsibility to maintain as adjacent owner but is subject to DC regulations, including permits for some tree removals and permanent installations (gates, signs)

- **Chevy Chase Village**
  - Park within municipal limits
  - Although a state-level agency, Commission intends to comply with local regulations
Public Policy Framework

Intergovernmental MOU

- 2002 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among Montgomery County, M-NCPPC, and Chevy Chase Village
  - Expresses intent of three parties to cooperate in operation and maintenance of Park
  - Chevy Chase Village contributed 25% of acquisition cost ($1.25M)
  - Park must be used “consistent with the purposes identified in the Legacy Plan”
  - Commission will operation/maintain park (per 1972 agreement with County)
  - Village shall provide municipal services (police, refuse, etc.)
  - Commission & Village will “jointly prepare a management plan” in accordance with Legacy goals for the park
  - Management Plan (now the Concept Plan/Operation & Use Plan) may be amended with mutual agreement from Commission & Chevy Chase Village
Nearby Parks and Recreation Facility Assessment

- Recreational facilities and park types within ½ mile (10-minute walk)
  - Buffer parks between Central Business Districts (CBDs) and residential areas
  - Small open space parks between road right-of-ways
  - Neighborhood parks
  - Civic center parks
  - County recreational center

- Recreational facilities and park types within 1 mile (20-minute walk)
  - Local Parks
  - Athletic fields
  - Larger playgrounds
  - Hiker/Biker trails
  - Playgrounds
    - All playgrounds in Maryland are more than a 10 minute walk
    - Most playgrounds are a 20-25 minute walk from Friendship Heights / Chevy Chase Village neighborhoods
    - The two closest playgrounds to this park are in DC:
      - Chevy Chase Park across Western Ave, currently under renovation
      - Chevy Chase Community Center / Library on Connecticut Avenue
Public Policy Framework

Urban Parks Guidelines *(in draft)*
- Goal is to support the County’s policies for *Growing Smarter* by creating great, walkable open space systems in the present and future urban areas.

*A Vision for Urban Parks* (adopted by Planning Board, 2010) *sets goals for urban parks* to:
- Improve the mental, physical and spiritual health of urbanized people by providing more visual and physical access to parks
- Provide green gathering spaces in urban areas to improve social connections and relieve stress
- Provide new outdoor recreational opportunities that will improve the physical health of the community
- Improve the health of the land through using low impact development and environmentally sensitive design in urban parks
- Provide interesting and aesthetic design that is embraced by the community
- Provide education on the health benefits of Parks
- Provide well maintained and safe spaces for community interaction

Existing Urban Park Pattern
- Our urban parks are mostly located at the edges of the urban areas, not in the centers.
What are people looking for in urban parks?

- Green gathering spaces for neighborhood events
- Escape from the heat
- Quiet places to relax and read
- Comfortable seating

What are people looking for in urban parks?

- Spaces for outdoor markets
  - Casual spaces or more formal spaces
- Places where pets are welcome
- Places to meet other pet owners and to socialize like community gardens
What are people looking for in urban parks?

- Playful Areas
  - Interactive artwork or sculpture
  - Traditional playgrounds
  - Sculptural climbing walls
  - Listening vessels

- Connection to nature through natural play elements
  - Climbing walls and logs
  - Fort building areas
  - Sand pits
  - Boulders for jumping and climbing
What are people looking for in urban parks?

- An outdoor office
  - A place to sit, eat lunch and work on laptop
- Spaces for outdoor exercising
- Comfortable seating
- Beautiful natural spaces that are inspiring and calming

What are people looking for in urban parks?

- Places to intermingle the older generation with the new generation or just people watch
- Accessibility and safety
  - Seniors are more likely to walk to open spaces if they are safe and attractive and provide areas for seating.
- A Place to learn
  - History
  - Culture
  - Ecology ... and more
What are people looking for in urban parks?

- Places with a local identity
- A unique identifying element

Information and good signage

- Neighborhood kiosk
- Interpretive signage
- Park signage
What are people looking for in urban parks?

Attractive low maintenance furnishings

- Signage
- Trash receptacles
- Bicycle racks
- Lighting

Outdoor Urban Recreational Trends

Urban outdoor recreation space

- Needed near offices and retail for the after work group activities
  And sport leagues such as reading clubs, mini-concerts, and young professionals meet and greet
Outdoor Urban Recreational Trends

Non-traditional activities and sports

- Splash spots
- HeartSmart trails and paths
- Theatre and dance event spaces
- Running events and paths
- Multi-use of courts for non-traditional activities

Demographic Trends

Demographic shifts in past and future affects park trends

- The County’s senior population is growing significantly inside the Beltway
- The oldest demographic area in Montgomery County located is adjacent to site (Village of Friendship Heights)
- Research is continuing on demographics of the immediate neighborhood
**Chevy Chase Open Space**

**Opportunities and assets**

- A beautiful green space in a highly urban area with healthy landscape plant specimens and trees
- Highly accessible by METRO, bus, walking, biking, or public parking lots
- Within walking distance from single-family and high-rise residential areas, offices, retail stores and restaurants
- Relatively flat terrain that is suitable for a variety of activities
- An active and interested partner in Chevy Chase Village

**Issues and constraints**

- Multiple Stakeholders with potentially varied interests
  - Transit users
  - Chevy Chase Village residents
  - Immediately adjacent neighbors
  - Village of Friendship Heights residents
  - District of Columbia residents
  - Employees and retail customers

- Site Compatibility
  - Small site – 2 acres
  - Compatibility issues with surrounding land uses, two-way impacts:
    - Large elevation change between park and retail area ("the wall")
    - Adjacent neighborhood concerns about noise, inappropriate uses, etc.
Issues and Constraints (cont’d.)

Design issues

- Paving versus green space
- Security and amount of lighting
- Safe pedestrian and maintenance vehicle access
- Way-finding and signage
- Regulatory constraints

Implementation issues

- Stiff competition for CIP funds for improvements (other parks, non-park projects)
- Severe constraints on maintenance funding limits design choices unless additional funding sources are found

Tonight

We need your input!

- Breakout Sessions
  90 minutes to answer two key questions

- Question #1: Vision
  What types of amenities and activities would you like to see offered at this park?

- Question #2: Issues
  What concerns you the most about the development of this park?
What's next?

- Next Meeting: Fall 2010
- Give us your ideas throughout the planning process at www.parkplanning.org
- Ongoing communications with community representatives
- Email updates will be sent to attendees
  - Please remember to give us your email address

Proposed schedule

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