

Renovation Plan For Broadacres Local Park

January 2004

The Park Today.



MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING DIVISION
Montgomery County Maryland Department of Park and Planning

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INTRODUCTION

A Renovation of Broadacres Local Park is proposed to coordinate with the addition and renovation of the Broad Acres Elementary School. Broadacres Local Park is in the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Area and located adjacent to Broad Acres Elementary School, St. Camillus Church and School, and Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. (Figure 1) The Park does not have its own entrance or separate parking, and there is no park sign, thus the site looks like a regular elementary school. The existing park facilities include a small old park playground and three softball fields that are used by the school, as there are none on the school property. (Figure 2)

Broadacres Local Park is extremely important in providing recreation for area residents. There are no other parks within safe walking distance of the hundreds of children in the adjacent apartments and parents do not generally have the capability of driving them elsewhere. Additionally the Brookview Local Park, approximately 1 mile to the north, will be replaced by a new elementary school in 2006.

Broadacres Local Park Vicinity Map

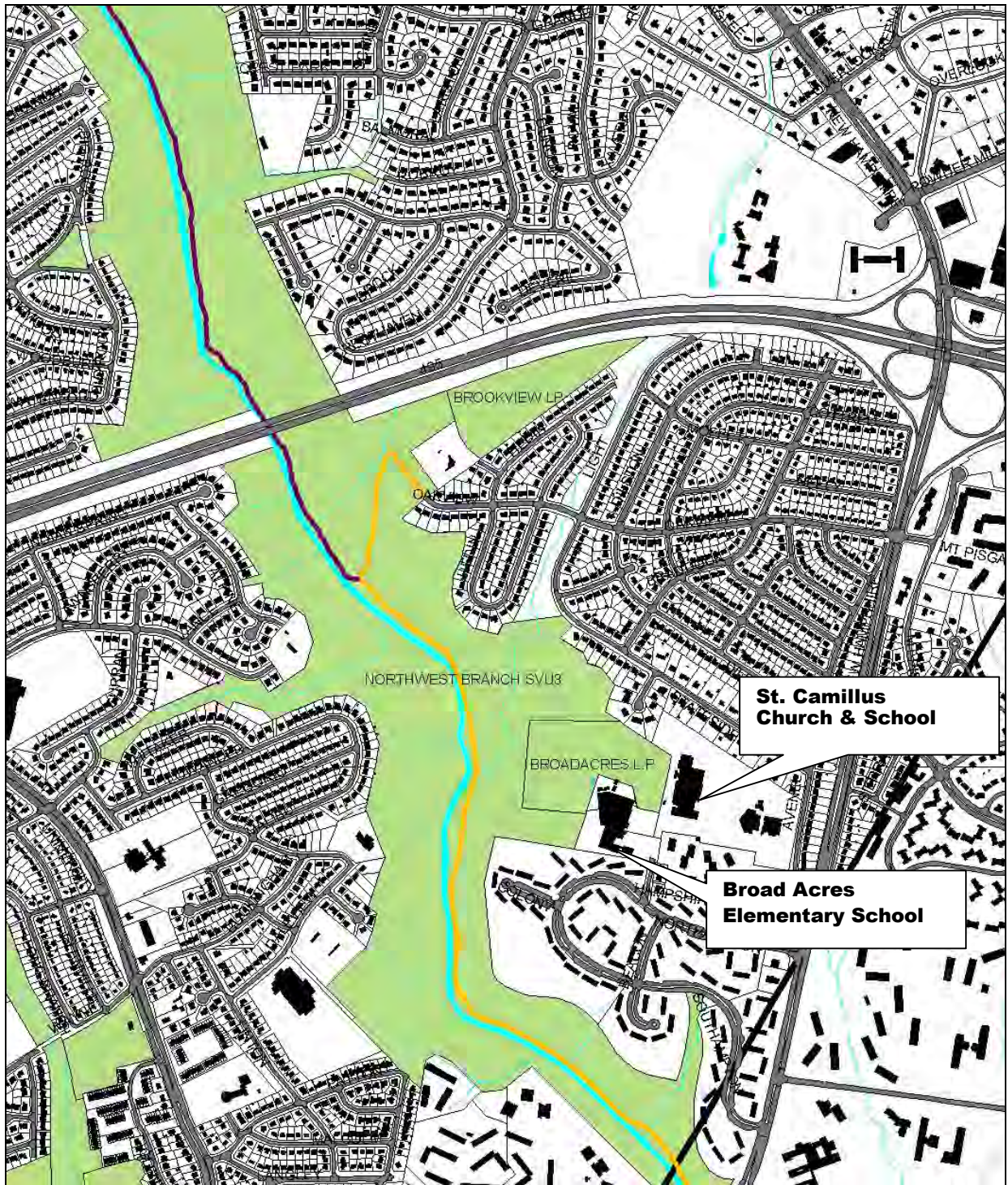


Figure 2

Broadacres Local Park Site Map

710 Beacon Road, Silver Spring, MD



PLAN OBJECTIVES

Recreation

- Develop the Park in a manner that complements the renovation/expansion of the adjacent Broad Acres School
- Provide adequate opportunities for recreation to serve adjacent residents and schools including a soccer field to serve the new school youth league
- Provide replacement opportunities for facilities that will be lost at Brookview Local Park

Appearance and Usability

- Create a separate park identity and provide an aesthetic park-like setting

Security

- Increase security in the Park
- Employ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Environmental Protection and Interpretation

- Provide opportunities for enjoyment of nature and interpretative education
- Protect sensitive environmental areas and provide adequate storm water management

Trails and Public Access

- Provide trail connections to the community and the adjacent Northwest Branch Trail
- Provide trail opportunities for walking, jogging, and biking

Provide Opportunities for School, Student and Community Involvement

- Encourage students to help refine the nature trail, including naming the trail, designing signage, and helping put in the trail

Provide opportunities for outdoor education and interpretation

Encourage the Community to adopt the park

SUMMARY OF PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

General

- The Renovation of Broadacres Local Park is proposed to coordinate with the addition and renovation of the Broad Acres Elementary School.
- Opportunities will be provided for students to participate in Park development including creation of a nature trail and art projects related to entrance area walls.

Recreation

New Recreation Opportunities will be provided to serve the Broadacres Community and replace park facilities that will be lost at Brookview Local Park. These include:

- new multi-use court for rollerblading, games, and basketball
- new playground and renovation of existing picnic area
- new proposed rectangular multi-use field for soccer, lacrosse, etc. with shaded seating areas for spectators.
- Paths for jogging, walking and biking

Appearance and Usability

A park-like appearance will be created for the park with:

- A new park entrance with a plaza and map kiosk
- Entrance features such as a mosaic wall, archway, etc.
- Screening of the loading platform by fencing and low plantings

Security

Security will be improved in the park by:

- Developing a circumferential trail that park police can use to patrol park and provide visibility into the rear area of the park.
- Designing Park entrances, landscaping and facilities so that visibility into the park is enhanced.

Environmental Protection and Interpretation

The adjacent wooded area of Northwest Branch is an important natural resource and no significant trees will be cut. It offers outstanding opportunities for environmental education and passive recreation.

The Plan proposes:

- A new nature interpretive trail, an outdoor classroom area, and student garden areas
- Environmental education areas and space for a container garden and collections of interesting leaves, nuts, etc.

Trails and Public Access

Trails are one of the County's most popular recreation facilities and can be used by persons of all ages. The Plan proposes:

- A new paved trail for biking, walking and jogging.
- A Natural surface trail for nature walks, hiking, and passive recreation
- A natural surface trail connection to the Northwest Branch hiker biker trail

Opportunities for School, Student and Community Participation

The Plan proposes a number of areas that the school and students can choose to use in their educational and summer camp programs. These areas would be installed and maintained by the school and community with park oversight. They include:

- A nature trail and areas for an outdoor classroom, student garden, natured item collection areas, potential container garden area and possible future wildflower or sunflower garden to be planted by students.
- Opportunities will be provided for students to participate in Park development including creation of a nature trail and art projects related to entrance area walls

SCOPE OF RENOVATION PLAN

The Scope of the Broadacres Renovation plan includes an analysis of the park including existing use and current problems and a natural resource inventory. The planning process included analysis of recreation needs and current park deficiencies with extensive input from adjacent schools, and apartment and single-family residents. The park renovation will begin at the completion of the school reconstruction project.

School Renovation/Expansion Project

The Broad Acres Elementary School adjacent to Broadacres Local Park will undergo a major renovation and expansion beginning in FY05, and portions of the Park will be used as a construction staging area. A very small part of the Park will also be acquired by BOE. (Figure 3). The school is currently overcrowded and has many portable classrooms, some of which extend onto park property. The Planning Board approved a mandatory referral for this renovation on June 6, 2002. An amended mandatory referral was handled administratively for four additional classrooms. The school and community have requested a renovation of the park in coordination with the school renovation. Completion of the School renovation is anticipated by July 1, 2006.

PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS

Broad Acres School and Community Resources Development Group

About three years ago Park and Planning Staff started working with the Broad Acres School, the community, and the Montgomery Departments of Libraries, Recreation, and Health & Human Services to alleviate safety problems that were occurring at this park school. A committee was formed that was called the Broad Acres School and Community Resources Development Group. Its intension was to coordinate community services (school, park, libraries, health, etc) to assist the residents in the surrounding community. MNCPPC participating staff included: Park Police, Southern Region, and Community Based Planning, Silver Spring Team. Total Park renovation was suggested and staff from Park Planning and Resource Analysis and Park Design and Development met with the group. It was indicated that activities are needed to serve the many children and teens that live near the park. There is a special need for youth soccer fields and a paved trail system that can be used by residents and park police. An initial site visit was held with school, park staff, and community representatives and they expressed a desire for paved walking paths, nature trails and nature study areas, and a multi use field area.

Summer Camp workshop (Park Workbook Day)

This summer, park staff held a program with 20 students attending camp at Broad Acres, and obtained their input on park needs. The children each received a Park Workbook to record their ideas and talked about the existing Park and park maps. They studied plants and animals they might see in the woods adjacent to the Park, and went on a nature walk. The children were fascinated by all the different things they saw, and particularly enjoyed the walk down to the Northwest Branch Trail. The students filled out workbooks answering questions and drawing pictures about things they wanted in the park (playgrounds, nature trail, map kiosk, water features, etc) and things they do not like about the current park (trash, loose dogs, etc.) The students took the workbooks home to their parents and brought them back with a letter to the Planning Board about what they would like to see in the Park. (Figure 4)

Public Meeting

Public input was also received from a November 18, 2003 Public Meeting and letters. Much support was voiced for the planned renovation, particularly the new soccer area and the paved path. Some concerns were raised regarding the proposed basketball court, porta-john location and safety of children during the construction phase.

A summary of the outreach meetings is included in the appendix.

Summer Camp Workshop Day

Broadacres Local Park Renovation PARK WORKBOOK DAY

This past July some of our Broad Acres summer camp students met with Montgomery County staff to help plan the renovation of Broadacres Local Park. Here is the result of their hard work.



1 Getting to Know the Park
Park Planners and Students discussed the park as it is today



2 Exploring the Park
Everyone enjoyed a trail walk through the woods with a Nature Specialist from Montgomery County



5 Letters to the Planning Board
Writing letters tell about the students' good ideas for the park



6 The Proposed Plan
This is what the park may look like when it is done



4 More Good Ideas
Collages with park features also helped the planners



3 Putting Ideas on Paper
Students drew pictures of their favorite park features and answered questions to help plan the park



For More Information Contact:

THE PARK TODAY

Existing Park Facilities

Broadacres is classified as a local park, which is defined by the Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan as parks that provide ballfields and both programmed and unprogrammed recreation facilities. Typical recreation facilities include ballfields, play equipment, tennis and multi-use courts, sitting/picnic area, shelters, buildings and other facilities. The existing 10.8-acre Broadacres Local Park currently consists of three softball fields and an old playground adjacent to the Broadacres School.

The park is adjacent to the heavily wooded Northwest Stream Valley Park. Several informal walking trails exist in the woods including one that connects to the paved Northwest Branch hiker-biker trail.

The park shares parking and an entrance with the adjacent school and most residents think it is part of the school as it has no attractive park – like amenities. The school currently has many portable classrooms, some of which extend onto park property. The entrance and signage is currently very confusing, but will be improved as part of the expanded school construction. A new sign with the Park and the school will be installed as part of the school's mandatory referral.

Current Park Use

Ballfield use is by far the greatest current park activity. The softball fields were heavily programmed in the spring of 2003, primarily by teams from Takoma Park and adjacent, St. Camillus School. A newly formed Broad Acres Elementary Youth Soccer League also used the grass field areas with cones for soccer games and practices. This fall, the Park was permitted both for softball and soccer games and practices. Informal soccer practices are also prevalent.

Broad Acres Elementary School uses the field area for daytime sports instructions and St. Camillus School uses an open area next to the school. Neighborhood residents walk in the parking lot and some children play on the old play equipment in the woods.

Current Park Deficiencies

There are several problems with the current park, which the renovation plan hopes to resolve.

- 1) There is no soccer field to serve the youth league.
- 2) The rear fields of the parks are difficult to patrol due to lack of visibility (a previous soccer field in the rear area was removed due to inappropriate use)
- 3) There are no paved walking paths in the park.
- 4) The playground is old.
- 5) There is lots of trash in the woods and some areas with invasive species.
- 6) There is no storm water management.
- 7) The park does not have its own separate identity
- 8) There is no park multi-use/basketball court (a previous court half on school property was removed because of conflicts between adults use of the courts and the school)
- 9) An improved connection is needed to the Northwest Branch hiker-biker trail.

Park Access and Parking

Vehicular access to the park is off Beacon Road. It is shared with the school and is currently very confusing as it relates to the entrance to St. Camillus School, which has an adjacent driveway off Beacon Road. Improvements to this intersection are proposed in conjunction with the Broad Acres School Renovation.

The parking lot shared with Broad Acres School is overcrowded during the school day, but is sufficient to accommodate park users after school and on weekends. Additional parking is also available in the St. Camillus School parking lot.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Broadacres Local Park is located in the Northwest Branch watershed, and the park is bordered on the west by Northwest Branch SVP Unit 3. The 13.3 acre park is cleared and developed with active recreation facilities.

NRI/FSD/ Forest Conservation Plan

The NRI/FSD has been completed. The adjacent Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, a portion of which is included in the Forest Stand Delineation, is dominated by mixed oaks and tulip poplar in the 18-28" dbh range. The understory is rather open in spots due to deer browse and to foot traffic from the nearby neighborhood and Broad Acres school. Species such as American holly, mountain laurel, brambles, and arrow-wood and maple-leaf viburnum were noted. A few non-native invasive shrubs like bush honeysuckle and vines like Japanese honeysuckle were noted, but in all the quality of the woods is good. There were a few specimen sized trees and a few herbaceous species noted. The Northwest Branch SVU3 forest is of good quality and has been designated Priority 1. A Forest Conservation Plan is not needed because this is a currently developed park and no trees are being cut (see appendix).

Broadacres Local Park Aerial View



THE PROPOSED PARK RENOVATION PLAN AND PROCESS

In developing a Plan for the renovation of Broadacres Local Park, it was important to consider several factors including demographic characteristics, currently adopted plans, and park needs.

Demographic Characteristics of the Community

Broadacres Local Park is particularly important to the Broad Acres community, as it is isolated from other neighborhoods in many ways:

- 1) There are language and cultural barriers- school population is 62% Hispanic, 22% African-American-American, 15% Asian, 1% caucasian. 23 different languages are spoken.
- 2) There is a lack of home ownership- the large majority of families live in apartments.
- 3) 3. Relatively low income-many adults work long hours, sometimes two jobs, allowing them less time for their children and community activities.
- 4) Physical isolation- The Broad Acres Community is isolated by the Prince George's County Line, New Hampshire Avenue, the Capital Beltway and Piney Branch Road.

Relationship to Currently Adopted Plans

Broadacres Local Park is in the Takoma Park Planning Area where there are substantial deficiencies for park land and active recreation facilities. The 1998 Park Recreation and Open Space (PROS) plan indicated that for the year 2010 there was an unmet need in the Takoma Park area for 7 additional ballfields and 5 basketball/multi-use courts. The 2001 PROS Implementation Study and The East Silver Spring Area Master Plan both proposed that a new basketball court be placed at Broadacres.

Determining Park and Recreation Needs at Broadacres

The need for community park facilities is best determined by talking to park users and staff, students and teachers, recreation advisory board members and nearby residents. Looking at demographic trends and Park and Recreation surveys and Plans is also useful. In determining park and recreation needs at Broadacres, staff met with many different groups, held site visits and public meetings and consulted many different sources. They included:

- The Broad Acres School and Community Resources Development Group, which has met quarterly over the last few years
- Broad Acres and St. Camillus School Staff and PTA Meetings
- Site visits and meetings with staff from M-NCPPC, Broad Acres, and representatives from Advisory Boards
- Public meetings with Recreation Advisory Boards adjacent residents, school and park users
- Workshop with summer camp students
- Current Use of the Park based on permits, observations, and user input
- Area needs as shown in the PROS Plan and PROS Implementation Study
- County-wide Recreation Needs Surveys
- Demographics of the area
- Nearby Recreation Areas

The following table summarizes the needs expressed by these sources and the responding Broadacres Plan Renovation recommendations. A full listing of meetings and site visits and dates is shown in table ...

Broadacres Park and Recreation Needs		
Source	Needs/Issues	Plan Recommendations
Broad Acres School and Community Resources Development Group Meetings	Need to improve Park Safety and Visibility of rear fields, renovate park	Add circumferential hiker/biker trail for police patrol and improved visibility
School Staff and PTA Meetings	<u>Broad Acres</u> - need for soccer field for youth, concern that new basketball courts would cause problems. <u>St. Camillus</u> - Need basketball court and informal play area next to school. Use softball field	Add new soccer/multi-use field, add multi-use court near St. Camillus and away from Broad Acres that has only 1 basketball standard and would not attract groups of players. Retain softball field
Site visits and meetings with park staff	Need for trails, soccer field, improvements to porta-john, park entrance, and amenities Need for storm water management	Proposed hiker/biker trail, nature trail, multi-use/soccer field, porta-john enclosure, park entrance plaza, and shaded sitting areas. Storm water management proposed under multi-use court.
Public meetings	Need for soccer field, concern about basketball and porta-john, use students to build nature trail	Add new soccer/multi-use field, have multi-use court away from Broad Acres school with only one standard, have attractive porta-john enclosure
Workshop with students	New playgrounds, hiker biker path, nature trail, trail connection to NW Branch Trail, courts and fields, pool, Clean/safe park	New playgrounds, trails and paths, connection to Northwest Branch, multi-use field and court
Current Use of the Park	Fields used by school, summer camp and after school by group ball teams and adjacent residents. Playground use	Add multi-use/soccer field, retain softball fields, renovate playground
Area needs as shown in the PROS Plan and other plans	Area needs additional ballfields, and retention/renovation of existing playgrounds and basketball courts. PROS Implementation study and ESS Master Plan proposed new basketball ct. at Broadacres	Add multi-use/soccer field, retain softball fields, add multi-use court with one basketball standard.
County-wide Recreation Needs Surveys	Greatest needs for trails, and ballfields	Proposed hiker/biker trail and nature trail with connection to Northwest Branch Trail. Add multi-use/soccer field, retain softball fields,
Demographics of the area	Extremely dense urban area (over 900 apartments), mostly minority residents,	Include walk-to recreation to serve adjacent residents.
Nearby Recreation Areas	Only 1 public park nearby Brookview Local Park, less than 1 mile will be replaced by a new Elementary School	Most park facilities removed at Brookview will be relocated at Broadacres Park including soccer field, multi-use court and playground.

THE PROPOSED PARK RENOVATION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the park and recreation needs analysis and the many meetings and site visits, a park renovation plan has been developed that alleviates many of the current park deficiencies. The Renovation of Broadacres Local Park is proposed to coordinate with the addition and renovation of the Broad Acres Elementary School. Opportunities will be provided for students to participate in Park development including creation of a nature trail and art projects related to entrance area walls.

The Plan includes the following recommendations:

Recreation

New Recreation Opportunities will be provided to serve the Broadacres Community and replace park facilities that will be lost at Brookview Local Park. These include:

- A new multi-use court for rollerblading, games, and basketball
- A new playground and renovation of existing picnic/playground area
- A new rectangular multi-use field for soccer, lacrosse, etc. with shaded seating areas for spectators.
- Paths for jogging, walking and biking

Appearance and Usability

Because the park is currently adjacent to the school and has no sign, many people do not know that it is there. It is important to create a park-like appearance for the park with:

- A new park entrance with a plaza, map kiosk and entrance features such as a mosaic wall, archway, etc.
- Screening of the loading platform by fencing and low plantings

Security

Security has been a primary issue at the park for many years. The Plan proposes to improve security in the park by:

- Developing a circumferential trail that park police can use to patrol park and provide visibility into the rear area of the park.
- Designing Park entrances, landscaping and facilities so that visibility into the park is enhanced.

Environmental Protection and Interpretation

The adjacent wooded area of Northwest Branch is an important natural resource and no significant trees will be cut. It offers outstanding opportunities for environmental education and passive recreation.

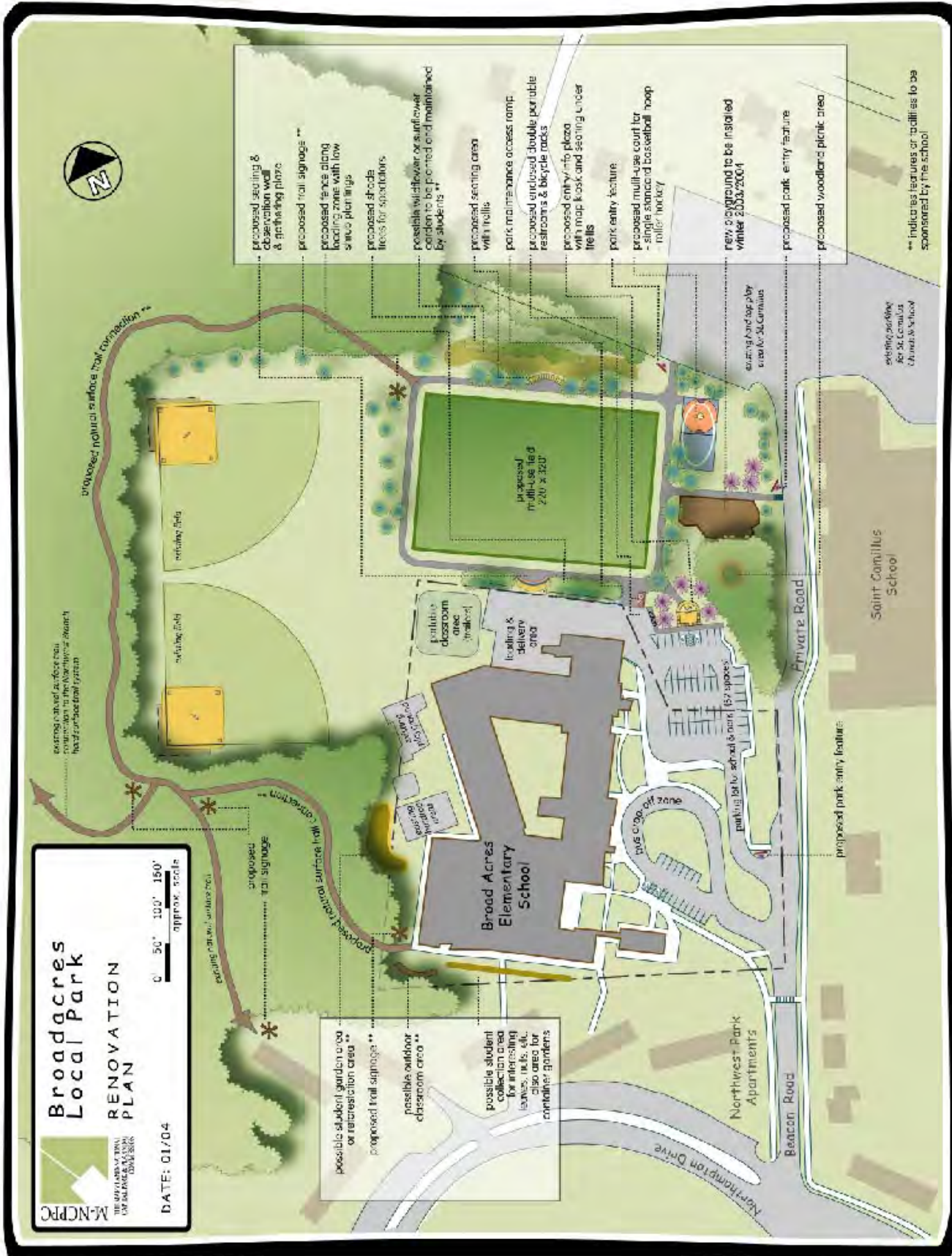
The Plan proposes:

- A new nature interpretive trail, an outdoor classroom area, and student garden areas
- Environmental education areas and space for a container garden and collections of interesting leaves, nuts, etc.
- Storm Water Management, which will be located in two places: 1) Under or adjacent to the new multi-use court, and 2) Adjacent to the parking lot.

Trails and Public Access

Trails are one of the County's most popular recreation facilities and can be used by persons of all ages. The Plan proposes:

- A new paved trail for biking, walking and jogging.
- A Natural surface trail for nature walks, hiking, and passive recreation
- A trail connection to the Northwest Branch hiker-biker trail.
-



Broadacres Local Park Proposed Plan Concept Map - Figure 6

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND COSTS

Cost Estimate and Schedule

The cost estimate for the park is \$860,000. A new playground, which will be installed this winter through the PLAR: Local Playground Renovation Program is not included in the \$860,000 cost estimate.

The Proposed FY05-10 CIP included a “placeholder” PDF for Broadacres Local Park pending preparation of the plan and cost estimate. If the Planning Board approves the Plan and cost estimate set forth in this packet, the “placeholder PDF” will be updated and submitted to the Planning Board for approval in early February. CIP staff advise that updating the placeholder PDF’s for both Broadacres and Winding Creek Local Parks may require adjustments to other Park and Planning Bond funded PDF’s in order to conform to the Park and Planning bond funded PDF’s affordability guidelines (SAG) for FY05 and FY06. All of these adjustments will be considered together and in the context of the County Executive’s January 15, recommendations on the Board’s proposed CIP

The placeholder PDF proposed to begin renovating the park upon completion of the Broad Acres School reconstruction in July 2006. The placeholder PDF programmed planning and design is anticipated in FY 05 and 06 and Park construction in FY 07 and 08. The project also leverages reimbursement funding (\$560,550) from Montgomery County Public Schools for the nearby Brookview Local Park, which is being reclaimed for construction of a new elementary school. The Planning Board was previously briefed on this issue on July 17, 2003.

Broadacres Local Park Renovation Cost Estimate

Planning, Design & Supervision

Design	103,000
Construction Mgmt.	68,000
TOTAL	171,000

Site Improvements & Utilities

Site Improvements	679,000
Utilities	10,000
TOTAL	689,000

PROJECT TOTAL	860,000
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APPENDIX

Forest Stand Delineation

A Forest Stand Delineation was completed for Broadacres Local Park (inventory dates 4/30/03 and 9/24/03) in order to give a detailed description of the on-site vegetational conditions, to determine priority forested areas, and to aid in defining areas necessary for reforestation and/or restoration once the park planning process has been completed. Broadacres Local Park is located in the Northwest Branch watershed, north and west of the intersection of Piney Branch Road and New Hampshire Ave. The 13.3 acre park property is bordered on the west by Northwest Branch SVP Unit 3, on the east by a church and private property, and on the north and south by private property.

Describing the forest to be involved in any Broadacres Local Park renovation scheme will necessitate a description of the Northwest Branch SVU3 Forest which surrounds Broadacres Local Park to the North, West, and part of the South, (since a trail has been proposed through the edge of the SVP), as well as a description of the actual forest within in the Local Park.

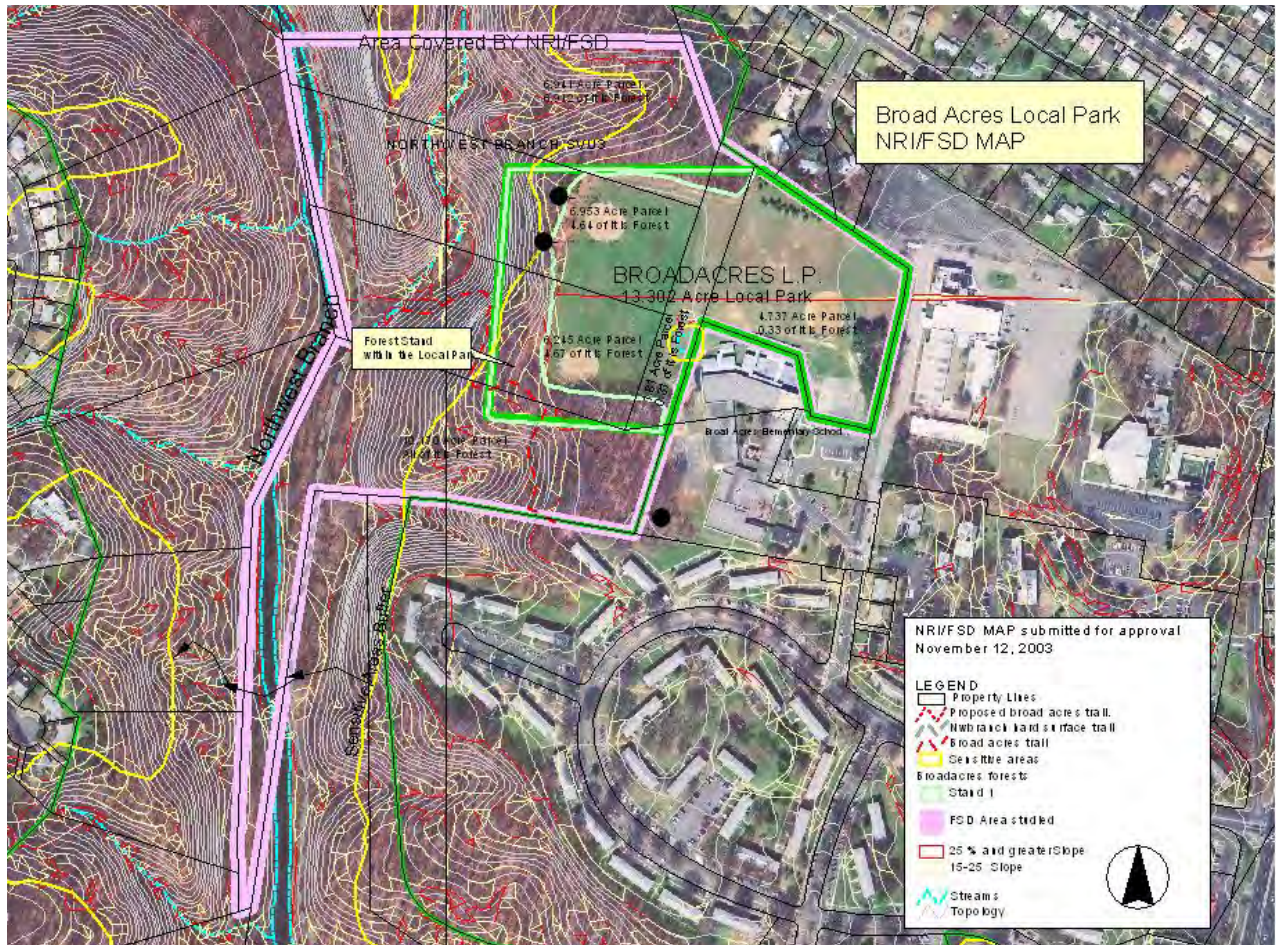
The Northwest Branch SVU3 Forest surrounding Broadacres Local Park is dominated by mixed oaks and tulip poplar in the 18-28" dbh range. Species noted include white, red, and willow oak (*Quercus alba*, *Q. rubra* and *Q. phellos*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), and a surprising number of black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*). The understory is rather open in spots due to deer browse and to foot traffic from the nearby neighborhood and Broadacres School, but species such as American holly (*Ilex opaca*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), brambles (*rubus* sp.), and arrow-wood and maple-leaf viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum* and *V. acerifolium*) were noted.

A few non-native invasive shrubs like bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera* sp.) and vines like Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) were noted, but in all, the quality of the woods was good. There were a few specimen sized trees scattered about, and despite some piles of trash and broken glass, there were even a few herbaceous species noted including mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), white wood aster (*Aster divaricatus*) and soloman's seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*). The Northwest Branch SVU3 forest is of good quality and has been designated Priority 1.

The actual forest within the boundaries of Broadacres Local Park proper is labeled Stand 1. It is approximately 3.1 acres in size, and is largely comprised of red maple, tulip poplar, black cherry and black gum with additional species noted including red oak, American beech, and black locust. Most of the trees within the local park are far smaller, younger trees than in the surrounding Northwest Branch SVU3. The understory is very open in this local park; some species noted include blackberry and black raspberry brambles, serviceberry, non-native bush honeysuckles and multiflora rose, and in the area closest to the contiguous Northwest Branch forest, mountain laurel. There is one spot in the Broadacres LP forest (a drainage outfall from the baseball field) where there is a considerable amount of trash, and non-native invasive species are beginning to take over. While Stand 1 is not forest of exceptional quality on its own, nor does it have specimen sized trees or environmentally sensitive areas, it does represent forested Park property contiguous to a high priority Stream Valley Park forest.

There is a .3 acre group of trees located along the eastern boundary of the Broadacres Local Park property. This area acts as a buffer between the Park acreage and the St. Camillus School property to the east. It is basically a cluster of white pine, oak, black walnut, and red maple trees with no understory or herbaceous layer present. It should be retained as a vegetative buffer, but it should not be labeled as a Forest Stand.

Natural Resource Inventory Map



Summary of Broadacres Planning Process/Meetings

Group	Meeting Dates
1. Broadacres School and Community Resources Development Group- - Started in October of 2000, focusing on Broad Acres park and school security and maintenance issues, and broadened the scope to include all community issues in April 2001	10/16/00, 11/8/00, 11/29/00, 12/19/00, 4/3/01, 5/22/01, 6/7/01, 7/19/01, 9/25/01, 11/14/01, 1/17/02, 3/12/02, 1/2/02, 6/6/02, 10/3/02, 11/7/02, 3/4/03, 5/13/03, 10/14/03, 12/4/03,
Site visits with School and Park Staff	4/30/03,
M.C. Planning Board Information Item	7/17/03
Broad Acres Student Workshop	7/28/03
Broadacres Parent Coordinating Group	8/28/03
PTA Meeting	10/14/03
Meeting with St. Camillus School Principal	11/17/03
Public Meeting	11/18/03
Park Staff Site Visit	12/18/03
Silver Spring Recreation Advisory Board Site Visit	1/11/04
M-NCPPC Staff Plan Review Meeting	1/13/04

Summer School Workbook Day

