



Delegated Action of the Executive Director

PROJECT

**Replacement of Garrett Park Road Bridge,
No. M-0352**

Rock Creek Stream Valley Park
Garrett Park Road and Rock Creek Park
North Bethesda, Maryland

SUBMITTED BY

Maryland National Capital Park and Planning
Commission

NCPC FILE NUMBER

8040

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

3105.00(48.00)44868

ACTION TAKEN

Approve preliminary and final site
plans

REVIEW AUTHORITY

Approval
Per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1) and 46
Stat. 482

The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), on behalf of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), has submitted a proposal to NCPC to replace roadway bridge No. M-0352 on Garrett Park Road over Rock Creek near the intersection of Beach Drive in Bethesda, Maryland. The existing roadway bridge is considered structurally deficient due to the declining condition of the substructure and bridge railings that no longer satisfy current vehicle crash safety standards. The project will require several property transfers from M-NCPPC to MCDOT through fee simple right-of-way, temporary easement, and perpetual easement agreements.

The proposed work includes removal of the existing bridge structure and construction of a new bridge, reconstruction of the roadway approaches, bike trail construction, new street lighting, and stormwater management improvements. The replacement bridge will be in the same location as the existing bridge, designed as a three-span, 163-foot long structure. The new bridge will be widened to the north to accommodate a 32-foot wide roadway for two 11-foot travel lanes with five-foot shoulders and an 11-foot, eight-inch wide shared-use path. A traffic detour route will utilize existing roads around the site during construction and at the request of M-NCPPC, a temporary pedestrian shared-use path will be constructed to the north of the bridge to preserve the continuity of the existing Rock Creek Trail system during construction. Nine new streetlights are proposed to increase safety. The streetlights will be the Montgomery County standard which consists of fiberglass poles with Washington glass globes on top.

The project will impact a total of approximately one acre along Garrett Park Road, within Rock Creek Stream Valley Park Units 4 and 5. Permanent impacts measure 0.56 acres and will result from the new roadway, bridge, and stormwater management facilities. Temporary impacts measure 0.54 acres (23,336 square feet) and will result from disturbance of natural surface areas from construction activities, to be restored to natural areas after project completion. This includes clearing of approximately one-half acre of forest. MCDOT will comply with reforestation regulations of the state and local jurisdiction for highway projects to mitigate removal of these trees. A landscaping plan is required as part of the park permitting process for any construction activity that will disturb vegetation on parkland. The M-NCPPC Parks Technical Reviewer must review landscaping plans for all proposed projects for approval in coordination with the M-NCPPC Parks forest ecologist and urban forester. The areas impacted by the project will be replanted per the M-NCPPC approved landscaping/reforestation plans.

Pursuant to the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act, NCPC’s review focuses on protecting the character and setting of the park and ensuring that any improvements are for park-related purposes. Projects that provide public benefits such as improving the water quality of streams along with improving park accessibility and park resources are encouraged. Examples of park-related improvements include adding wetlands and meadow areas to a stream valley park, adding a hiker-biker trail section to improve the regional network, or adding a foot-bridge and connector trail to improve access to an existing park.

The proposed project will improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the Rock Creek Park Trail system and through the park, along Garrett Park Road, with a wider sidewalk along the north side of the road. In addition, stormwater management improvements design to meet current industry standards will enhance the health of Rock Creek by reducing sedimentation and nutrient loading of the stream. Overall, the proposed improvements will enhance park facilities, water quality, and overall setting of Rock Creek Park; therefore, staff finds the improvements are valid uses of park property under the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act.

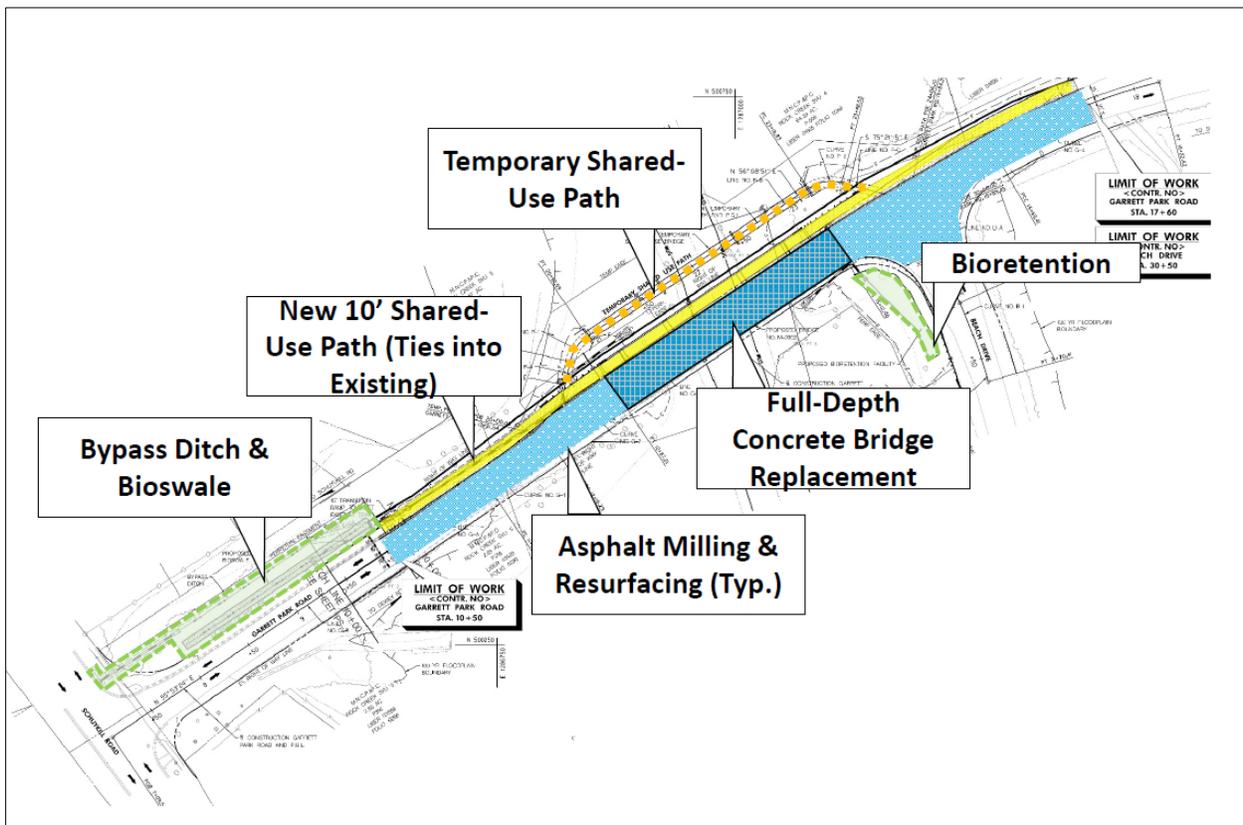


Figure 1 Proposed Improvements

NCPC has a responsibility to ensure this project’s compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) due to the Commission’s approval authority of improvements on land purchased with Capper-Cramton funds. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to evaluate the anticipated short- and long-term impacts of the project as compared to a “no action” alternative. The EA was available for public comment from June 15, 2020 to June 28, 2020. No public comments were received during this time. Based on the environmental analyses, staff determined that no significant environmental impacts would occur.

Therefore, staff drafted a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which was also available for public comment. The FONSI completes the Commission's NEPA responsibility and no further action is required.

The project has been reviewed by the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT), which determined that there would be no historic properties affected by this undertaking. Based on the project information provided, NCPC concurs with MHT's "no adverse effect" finding, which satisfies the Commission's Section 106 responsibility under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for this project.

* * *

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996 and per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1) and 46 Stat. 482, I approve the preliminary and final site development plans for a new bridge across Rock Creek, along Garrett Park Road, and the associated trail and stormwater management improvements within Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, in North Bethesda, Maryland.



Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

7/2/20
Date