National Capital Planning Commission

NCPC File No. 8177

FLETCHERS FIELD PARK STREAM RESTORATION AND FLOODPLAIN ENHANCEMENT

Northeast Branch Stream Valley Park
Riverdale, Maryland

July 9, 2020

Finding of No Significant Impact

Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR, Parts 1500-1508), and the National Capital Planning Commission's NEPA Regulations, I have evaluated the preliminary and final site plans for the Fletchers Field Park Stream Restoration and Floodplain Enhancement in Riverdale, Maryland as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3105.00(48.00)44868; and the Fletchers Field Park Stream Restoration and Floodplain Enhancement Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) along with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) as the lead agency. Based on the foregoing, I have determined that the Proposed Action to relocate and restore an existing stream, create emergent and forested wetlands, and construct a sidewalk extension at Fletchers Field Park will not have a significant impact on the human environment.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to prevent further deterioration of an existing stream located in Fletchers Field Park and to enhance water quality through the removal of sediment and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) pollutants that would enter the Anacostia River and Chesapeake Bay. This will be done by relocating the stream to the center of the floodplain and constructing a floodplain bench set below the existing bank elevation of the stream channel to allow for frequent floodplain reconnection. The proposal is needed to stop the stream from continuing to migrate, erode, and pollute downstream receiving waters.

Proposed Action

The proposed action involves constructing a new, 760-foot long meandering stream channel with a stepped pool system and floodplain bench; establishing approximately 31,000 square feet of forested wetlands; establishing approximately 8,500 square feet of emergent wetlands; and constructing a 100-foot long sidewalk extension that terminates at an "education station" with

signage about the functions and benefits of streams and wetlands. To perform this work, a limit of disturbance will be established around the site and sediment and erosion control devices will be implemented. Approximately 30 trees will be removed within the limit of disturbance to complete the necessary grading operations and stream bank protection.

Selected Alternative

Based on the analysis presented in the EA, the Proposed Action is selected for implementation. The Proposed Action will relocate and restore an existing stream that has deteriorated and become highly eroded over time which negatively impacts water quality of the Anacostia River and Chesapeake Bay. The stream would be stabilized with a new bank and surrounded by new emergent wetlands and an acre of forested wetlands with a net increase of approximately 200 trees.

The Selected Alternative would also increase passive recreational opportunities in the park with the addition of the wetlands and additional vegetation. The proposed education space will explain the stream restoration project and educate visitors about the function of streams in reducing stormwater runoff and pollution from receiving drainage areas.

Standard grading equipment would be staged at the nearby parking lot and used on site. A laydown area is adjacent to the stream and would be used for material storage, material handling, assembly, mobilization, and demobilization. Parking for construction personnel would be accommodated in the on-site parking lots for six to eight workers on site. Equipment storage is anticipated to remain within the laydown areas located in the parking lot. The project duration is anticipated to be 60 to 90 days and will begin in July 2020.

Other Alternatives Evaluated

The EA analyzed a No Action Alternative as well as three other alternatives that might meet the purpose and need: traditional maintenance devices; upstream improvements; and a pipe enclosure system.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed stream restoration would not be implemented and the current rate of erosion of the parkland and deposition of pollutants into the Anacostia River would be maintained. This situation would result in the lack of treated impervious acres to be reported to the State of Maryland Department of the Environment and ultimately the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a part of the Prince George's County MS-4 Permit[1]

[1] Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) refers to a collection of structures designed to gather stormwater and discharge it into local streams and rivers. MS4 Permits are a requirement

obligations. Further, the erosion from this stream would continue to contribute to the decline of the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the Purpose and Need of the project.

Traditional Maintenance Devices

This alternative would involve minor maintenance and trash removal in the stream, including rip rap (a range of rocky material placed to protect from scour and erosion) and other structural devices. These devices would result in some removal of downstream pollution, including organic or inorganic matter that is suspended in the water column that can be filtered out such as clay, silt and sand. However, traditional maintenance devices would not be eligible for MS-4 Permit credit and are not supported by environmental permit regulatory agencies as a best practice. In addition, this alternative does not create an environment conducive to habitat creation nor the overall goals of the project. The stream would continue to erode over time and reduce usable park area, which would ultimately threaten the integrity of the current park improvements. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

Upstream Improvements

This alternative would be proposed to provide an upstream stormwater management facility to dissipate the flow in large storm events. Much of the upstream property either has no viable outfall or is privately owned. Construction of an upstream device results in significant impact to environmental features. It would not be economically viable as property would have to be obtained to construct an upstream device. Logistically, there would not be enough room to construct the device would interruption to adjacent public rights-of-way and this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

Pipe Enclosure System

This alternative would propose the elimination of the stream and the replacement of the natural conveyance system with concrete storm drain conveyance pipe or channel to handle the appropriate storm events. The pipe would be placed at the centerline of the stream and covered with material to create a level field and then stabilized. This solution is an extreme solution and normally only contemplated when property improvements are so threatened with destruction or damage that there is no other means of protection. Therefore, this solution is generally not found to be acceptable in the conditions that exist for this project and was dismissed from further consideration.

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of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for urban areas.

Standard for Evaluation

Under NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and NCPC NEPA Regulations, an EA is sufficient and an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared if the EA supports the finding that the major federal action will not significantly affect the human environment. The EA for this project was prepared in accordance with this standard.

Potential Impacts

As documented in the EA, the Proposed Action would have negligible short-term impacts during construction on air quality, water resources, vegetation, and recreational facilities due to the construction activities necessary to implement the Proposed Action. These minor impacts are outweighed by the results of the No Action Alternative as described above. Therefore, the selected alternative can be implemented without significant adverse effects, as defined in 40 CFR §1508.27.

Mitigation Measures

Although no significant impacts to the environment are anticipated, M-NCPPC would ensure all required plan approvals and permits are secured from the appropriate local, State, and federal agencies. These include:

- Prince George's County Department of the Environment – Stormwater Management Plan
- Prince George's County Soil Conservation District – Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
- MNCPPC – Natural Resource Inventory
- MNCPPC – Tree Conservation Plan Type 2
- Maryland Department of the Environment – Permit to Disturb Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waters
- Army Corp of Engineers - Permit to Disturb Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waters
- NCPC – Approval review with a focus on protecting the character and setting of the parks and ensuring that all development is for park-related purposes pursuant to the Capper Cramton Act.

The project will also follow proper sediment and erosion control procedures during construction to minimize potential temporary impacts to air quality, water resources, and vegetation.

6/29/20

Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

Date