MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property Name: Sligo Creek Parkway Inventory Number: M: 32-15 PG: 65-25

Address: Sligo Creek Parkway

Owner: Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

Tax Parcel Number: Multiple Tax Map Number: Multiple

Project: I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation Study Agency: State Highway Administration

Site visit by: _____ Staff: ☐ No ☐ Yes Name: _____ Date: _____

Eligibility recommended: _____ Eligibility not recommended: _____

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐A ☐B ☐C ☐D ☐E ☐F ☐G ☐ None

Is property located within a historic district? ☐No ☐Yes Name of District: _____

Is district listed? ☐No ☐Yes

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation Study Historic Resources Survey and Documentation of Eligibility Report

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*:

Maryland's Sligo Creek Parkway is one of a number of parkways in the Capital Beltway area. Most have been addressed in the 1991 National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination: "Parkways of the National Capital." The purpose of this DOE form is to amend the previous nomination with the addition of the Sligo Creek Parkway.

Maryland's Sligo Creek Parkway, located in a stream-valley park of the same name, is approximately 5 miles long with an average right-of-way of 300'. It is one of the smallest of Montgomery County's stream-valley parks, but the single-longest parkway in the county not affiliated with other jurisdictions. The roadway commences at University Boulevard near Silver Spring to the north, and winds southeastward to New Hampshire Avenue in Takoma Park (now unified into Montgomery County); additional Sligo Creek Park lands continue beyond the north terminus of the road to Dennis Avenue, and southward to the confluence of the Northwest Branch. One of the largest recreational areas affiliated with the parkway is Sligo Golf Course, located on the east side of the creek/road just below the Capital Beltway. Sligo Golf Course and Sligo Creek Parkway total 450.46 acres, excluding park areas without a scenic road.

Prepared by: Sara Amy Leach, KCI Technologies, Inc., January 2000

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended: X X Eligibility not recommended:

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐A ☐B ☐C ☐D ☐E ☐F ☐G ☐ None

Comments: HOWEVER, WE RECOMMEND THAT AN INDIVIDUAL MUP WHICH IDENTIFIES ALL OF THE CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES BE PREPARED.

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services 9/14/00 Date

Reviewer, NR Programs 10/12/00 Date

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Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*: (CONT'D)

The parkway was a project conceived by planning officials and developers to complement the boom in the construction of suburbs during the 1920s-30s. Within the park, a two-lane undivided roadway meanders along Sligo Creek, accessing numerous foot paths, bridges, picnic and playground areas, and a golf course. There are a minimum of at-grade intersections along the route, whose width generally buffers adjacent development from the motor road, and improves the motorists' recreational experience by eliminating roadside distractions. The parkway's road-related features include stone retaining walls and bridges, metal foot bridges, vistas along the curvilinear route to intersecting bridges/stream views, reinforced-timber guardrail, and parking areas. Although there are a number of 1-story frame buildings in the vicinity of the Capital Beltway and Sligo Creek Parkway, none are original to the site and older than ca. 1950 (Hewitt interview). The current 9-hole Sligo Golf Course is located just south of the Beltway on a portion of the old Argyle Country Club lands, served by a new 1959 clubhouse. North of the Beltway and south of Forest Glen Road are a number of non-contributing structures currently operated by the Argyle Park/YMCA.

An intensive field survey is recommended to identify the precise number of contributing and non-contributing buildings and structures for the purposes of National Register listing.

Historical Context

In 1927, a bill was passed in the Maryland General Assembly to establish a Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to "provide for acquisition of land for parks, pathways, and other public places and public works..." in the suburban Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. Planning engineer Irving Root was hired as the commission's chief planner. Two years later, landscape architect Roland W. Rogers was hired to develop a park system for the community (McMaster and Hiebert, 9). The acquisition of green space was furthered in the late 1920s, concurrent with the formation of the MNCP&PC, with the passage of a property tax of 7 cents per $100 valuation levied in Montgomery County; Prince George's County instituted a 2-1/2 cents tax. The monies went toward the purchase of land for and the development of parks (Orlin, 233). The Capper-Crampton Act of 1930 encouraged this activity even more, by providing one-third the cost in federal funding for the acquisition of park land along the tributaries of Rock Creek and the Anacostia River.

Rogers foresaw that stream valleys could be used as parks because they were unfit for building purposes, and that the parks--which could be bounded by curvilinear roads--would benefit the adjoining property owners. Sligo Creek Parkway was the first of several stream-valley parks constructed, Rogers observed, because most of the land for it was donated by E. Brooke Lee and adjoining property owners (McMaster and Hiebert, 287-88).

Home buyers were helped to recognize the benefit of the M-NCPPC's parks and parkways through advertisements. In the 1930s, Lee's own North Washington Realty Company, for instance, promoted the "Beautiful Parks, Arterial Highways, and Planned Home Communities in the Silver Spring Area," which included those snuggled up against Sligo Creek Park, and the Argyle and Indian Springs country cubs (McMaster and Hiebert, 269).

E. Brooke Lee (1893-1984), a native of the area whose family owned a substantial amount of land in southern Montgomery County, was known by the 1920s as "Mr. Silver Spring," thanks to his prolific political, social, and real estate dealings. He was involved in the subdivision of land and home construction in more than half of the subdivisions platted in Silver Spring throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. Like his father, he entered politics and influenced the development of the county through policy and administration. Lee introduced the legislation establishing the M-NCPPC, helped draft the Capper-Crampton legislation, and worked with state roads commissions to develop new thoroughfares in the county (Sechrist 57-58, 61-62).

Plans for Sligo Creek Parkway, as well as Rock Creek Parkway in Maryland, were developed by 1929. Montgomery County began acquiring land along Rock Creek, Sligo Creek and the Northwest Branch in 1930, and by 1941 it had amassed a 958-acre system (McMaster and Hiebert, 287-88). Sligo passed through a narrower valley than Rock Creek, so the number of its facilities was more limited.

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The parkway was probably developed in six units. In Montgomery County, Unit 1 included 0.4 miles between Blair Road and Carroll Road, which in 1934 was partially paved with a 20' wide macadam roadway. Unit 2 was a 1.2-mile length from Blair Road to Colesville Road, paved the same year. Unit 3 was a 1-mile stretch from Forest Glen Road to Colesville Road
Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*: (CONT'D)

(Minutes, 24 May 1934). Some portions of the roadway had to be supported with masonry walls; recreational facilities included ballfields, basketball and tennis courts, pools, playgrounds, and a stable/bridle path.

Some park construction was carried out through the Works Progress Administration program in the mid 1930s, including: building drains along existing concrete roads, ditch digging, laying storm drains, creek cribbing, footbridges, masonry headwalls; clearing, grubbing, grading and seeding park land; building a running track, foot paths, playground equipment, drinking fountains, and shelters (Minutes, 12 March 1936).

By 1942, Units 1-3 in Montgomery County totaled almost 160 acres, reaching as far north as Forest Glen Road; in Prince George's County, more than 24 acres was amassed ("Looking Forward...," 20). Unit 4 linked Forest Glen Road and Old Bladensburg Road, a distance of 1-1/3 miles encompassing 110 acres; it was paved in 1954 at a cost of $120,000. Facilities here—which would be lost to Beltway construction within a few years, contained tennis courts, ball fields, badminton, and a parking area. The park's proximity to Montgomery Blair Senior High School offered the opportunity for a recreational partnership. (M-NCP&P *Annual Report*, 1953-54).

> Between Piney Branch Road and Colesville Road, which is bordered by the largest concentration of population in the Silver Spring area, the parkway has been more intensively developed. Here, one finds tennis courts, game areas, and a small field house which is used intensively both day and night by various groups on outings and picnics. ("A Program for Park...," 3)

By 1955, officials were building passive and active facilities in Unit 6, north of Old Bladensburg Road. By this time, Montgomery County had 382 acres of Sligo Creek Park and Parkway lands, Prince George's, 94 acres.

The complementary relationship between exclusive suburban enclaves and country clubs in Montgomery County began during the last years of the 19th century with the Chevy Chase Club, organized in 1895, followed soon after by the Columbia County Club (1909). Woodmont and Burning Tree country clubs opened in 1922, Congressional Country Club in 1924. These were the most exclusive of venues. Others, such as Argyle Country Club and Indian Spring Country Club, built along Colesville Road during the1920s, were less so (McMaster and Hiebert, 266).

The M-NCPPC operated public clubs, Glenbrook in the Bethesda area, and in the Silver Spring area, "Sligo Club is [its] fashionable offering to the public." Glenbrook "offers those who cannot pay the high costs of private club membership, right-fancy surroundings, minus a cocktail lounge, in which to indulge their fancies for club-life." (*Record*, 28 December 1951)

In about the early 1950s, M-NCPPC acquired the Argyle County Club lands, located east of the creek, south of Forest Glen Road and west of Dallas Avenue; the purchase included 9 holes and a single building, which later burned (Hewitt, interview). Once the Capital Beltway plans were revealed to "make a portion of the Sligo Golf Club unusable" in the mid 1950s, park officials began to clear portions of Sligo Park to accommodate a new course, "so there will be no interruption in play when the road is built" (M-NCPP, 1955-56 *Annual Report*). The former Sligo Golf Clubhouse, a 1-1/2-story bungalow-like building was replaced with a Modern structure that was dedicated in 1959 (M-NCP&P *Annual Reports*, 1954-55, 1960).

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The registration requirements for a parkway under the Multiple Property nomination includes the following. Sligo Creek Parkway encompasses the vast majority of these elements, and is therefore eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

A. Landscape Architecture:
   1. natural terrain and topography
   2. existing and enhanced native vegetation
   3. an articulated buffer
   4. vistas

B. Architecture/structures
   1. dual-lane roadway
   2. culverts/guard rails
   3. bridges
   4. monuments/statuary

C. Site
   1. limited and well-distanced access
   2. vertical and horizontal curves
   3. enhancement of natural scenic features
   4. roadside overlooks, parks, parking areas

Bibliography

"Country Clubs, and Smart Hunts Numerous Here." *The Record,* 28 December 1951.

Interview. Jack Hewitt, former director of Maryland-National Capital Parks, 27 January 2000.

KCI Technologies, Inc. *Suburbanization Historic Context and Survey Methodology, I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation Study, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland, Volumes I and II.* Prepared for the Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration, November 1999.

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*: (CONT'D)

Leach, Sara Amy. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination "Parkways of the National Capital," 1991.

"Looking Forward with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission." Silver Spring, 1942.

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Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission. Minutes. 1927-1937 (Microfilm roll 1)....

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission. "A Program for Park Purchase in the Maryland-Washington Regional District," 18 September 1946.

McMaster, Richard, and Ray Eldon Hiebert. *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, MD.* Rockville: Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976.

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Orlin, Glenn. "The Evolution of the American Urban Parkway." Doctoral thesis, George Washington University, 1992.

Sechrist, Stephanie Ann. "Silver Spring, Maryland: Residential Development of a Washington Suburb, 1920-1955." M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 1994.

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PRESERVATION VISION 2000; THE MARYLAND PLAN
STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXTS

I. Geographic Region:

- ☐ Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
- ☐ Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
- ☒ Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
- ☐ Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- ☐ Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
- ☐ Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
- ☐ Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- ☒ Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
- ☐ Unknown Period (☐ prehistoric ☐ historic)

III. Historic Period Themes:

- ☐ Agriculture
- ☒ Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- ☐ Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- ☐ Government/Law
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Religion
- ☒ Social/Educational/Cultural
- ☐ Transportation

IV. Resource Type:

Category: Road/Park

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Transportation/Recreation

Known Design Source: None

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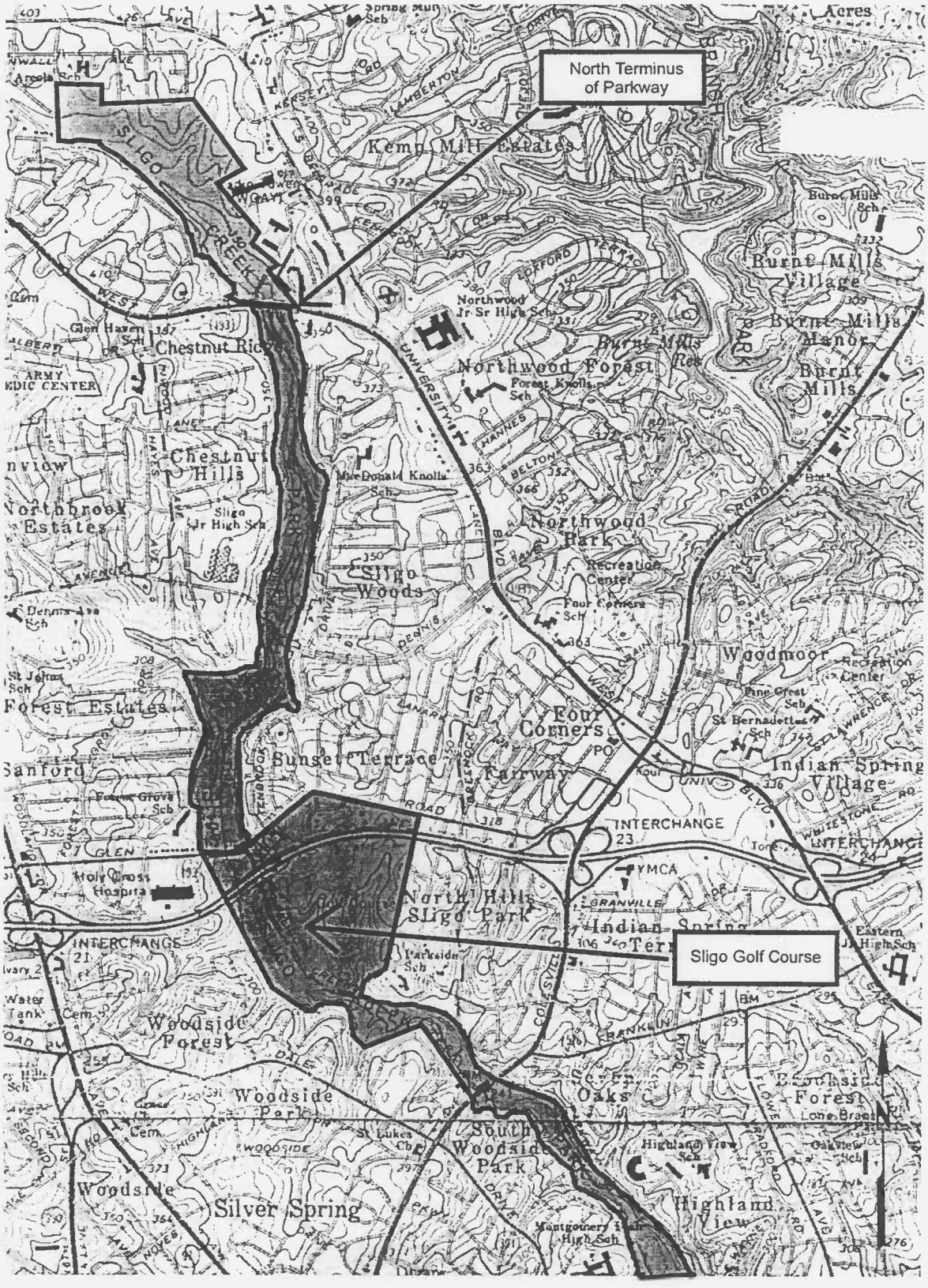
Sligo Creek Parkway
National Register Boundary
Map 1 of 2



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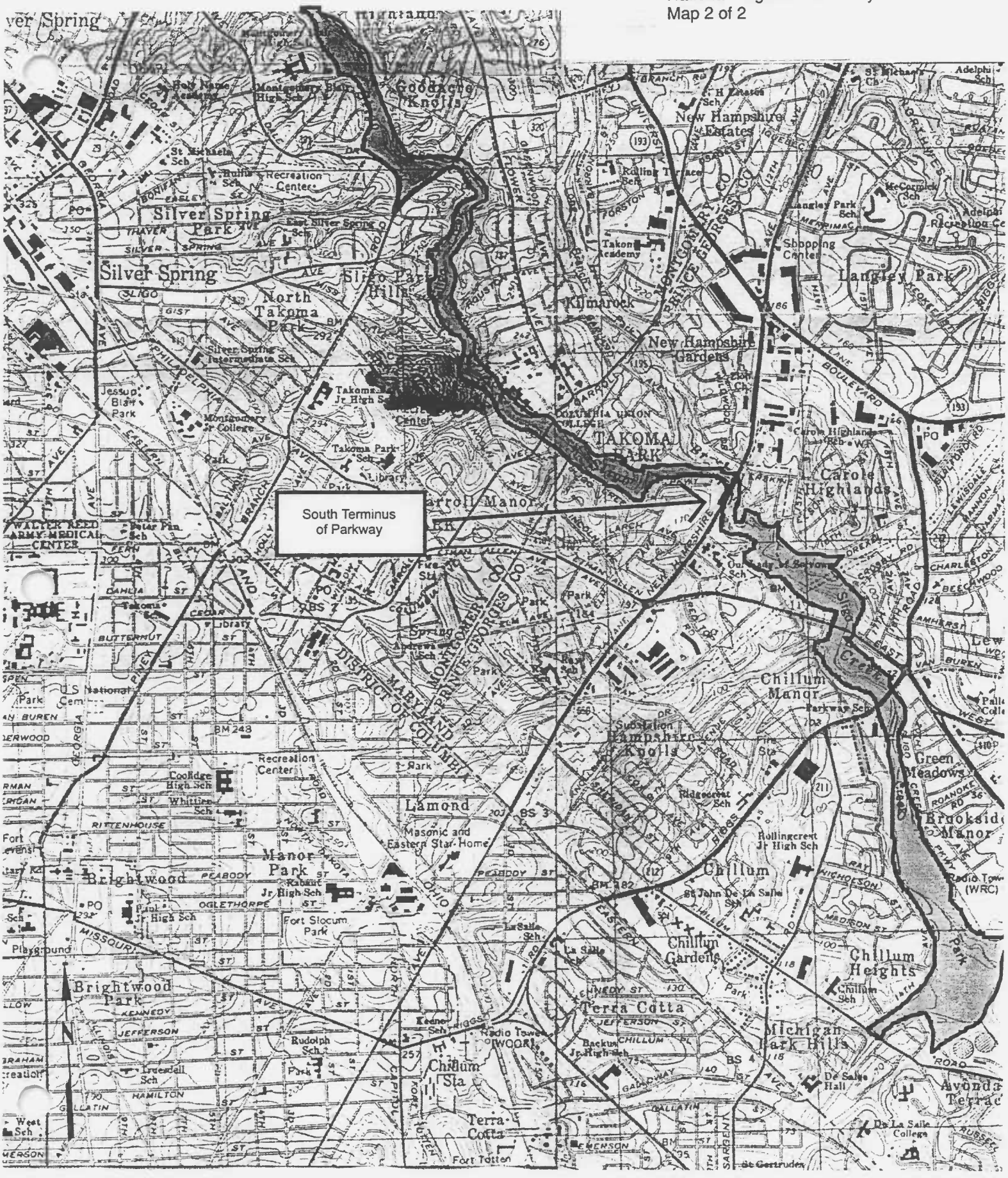
Sligo Creek Parkway
National Register Boundary
Map 2 of 2