

DRAFT, January 13, 2014

CITYWIDE PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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CITYWIDE PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Foreword

The City of Alexandria's large parks, including Four Mile Run Park, Simpson Stadium Park, Chinquapin Park, Hensley Park, Brenman and Boothe Parks, and the Holmes Run Park System, are in need of renovation in order to meet the Citywide recreational and open space needs of residents. As the City grows denser and land is finite, those spaces are increasingly important in providing respite, recreation and gathering spots. This plan sets out to provide a framework for gradual improvement to these sites and the quality of life in Alexandria.

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CITYWIDE PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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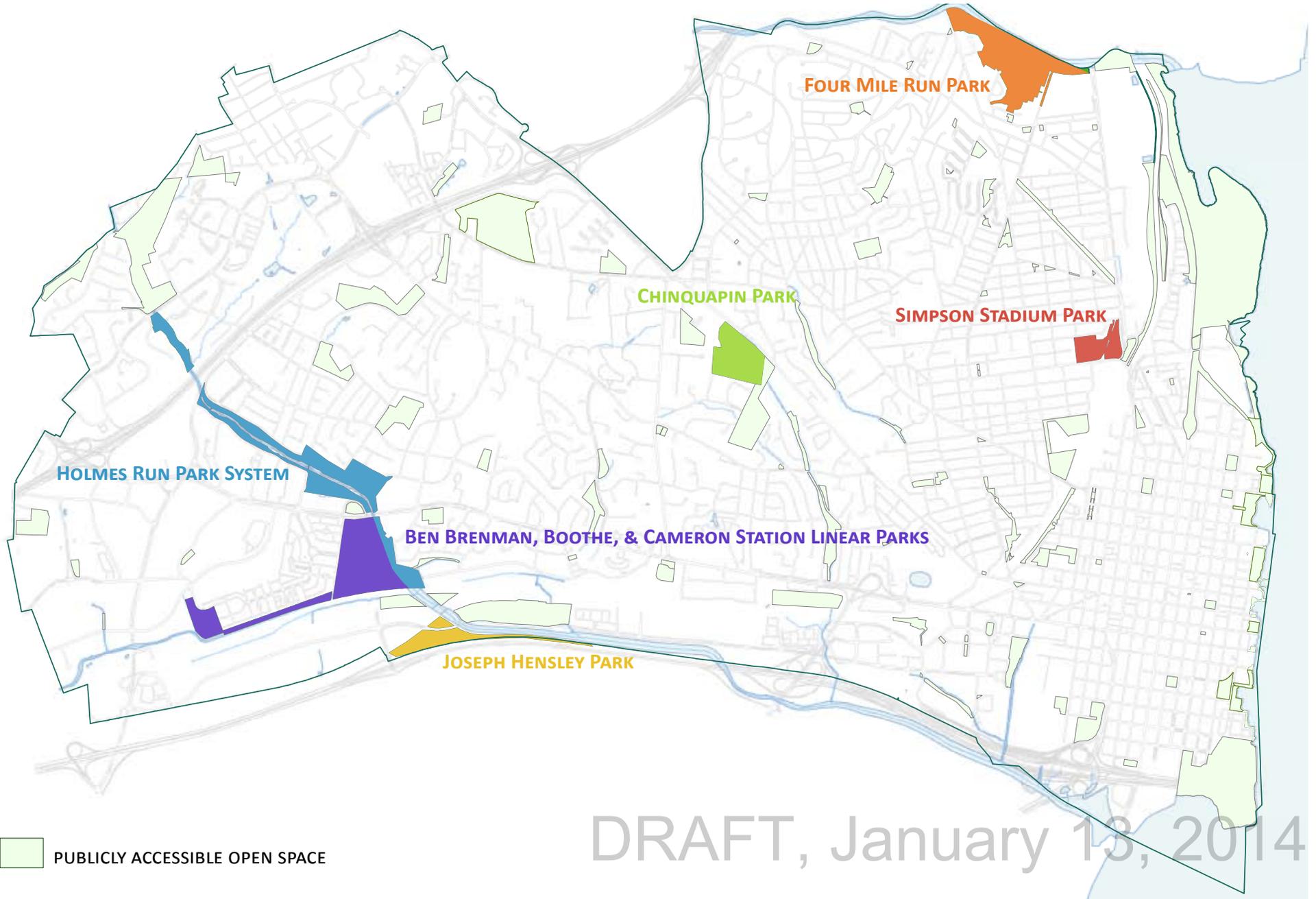
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Introduction & Park Plans

Classification	Description	Size	Service	Estimated Planning Process Timeline
Citywide	Contains multiple uses within park boundary including; attracts visitors from all over the City Example: Chinguapin Park	15 to 50 acres	0-25 miles from users	2013 – 2014
Neighborhood	May include multiple uses within park boundary; attracts nearby residents Example: Beverley Park.	20,000 sq. ft. to 5 acres	0-5 miles from users	2014 – 2015
Pocket Park	Small open space; mainly single use attracting nearby residents Example: Sunset Mini Park	Under 20,000 sq. ft.	.25-0.5 mile or less from users	2015
Natural Resource Areas	Includes open spaces that are primarily passive-use or preservation areas. Example: Clermont Natural Park	No Minimum or Maximum	Citywide	2015 – 2016
Shared Use	Includes parks that share facilities with schools and recreation centers Examples: Patrick Henry Field	5-20 acres (average)	0-25 miles from users	Included as part of the 2013-2014 Long-Range Educational Facilities Plan
Destination/ Historical	Attracts users from beyond the region, typically because of a particularly unique features. Example: Ft. Ward Park, Waterfront Park System	Varies	0-100 or more miles.	Park Plans completed individually for these sites because of their unique character.
Regional	Includes lands or facilities administered by other regional entities Example: Cameron Run Regional Park	50-75 acres	0-100 miles from users	Planned by external jurisdictions.
Corridors/Linear Parks/Trailways	Includes trailways, corridors and linear parks that serve primarily as linear bikeway corridors; may include ROWs. Example: Metro Linear Park	No Minimum or Maximum	0-100 miles from users	Included as part of the upcoming Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan

The Typologies matrix above outlines how parks and open spaces are classified by service area and size. The Citywide Parks constitute the first phase of the planning process for all parks in Alexandria.

In the summer of 2012, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) began a multi-year process to develop a series of Park Improvement Plans. Each plan will cover a collection of parks categorized by typology, and will ensure a system of open space that equitably responds to the City’s recreational and natural resource needs while efficiently utilizing available resources. All open spaces will ultimately be included within the process, as shown in the timeline on the left, and each plan will be re-visited every ten years to ensure the recommendations are current and to accommodate necessary changes in use.

The Citywide Large Park Improvement Plan is the first of the Improvement Plans. RPCA is planning for these parks first because the Citywide Parks impact the most amount of residents and renovation in these parks will influence the recreational uses of other sites. The goal of this initiative is to study and understand the existing conditions and future needs for Alexandria’s parks that are over 15-acres, municipally owned, and have multiple uses. The Citywide Parks include: **Ben Brenman and Armistead L. Boothe parks**, **Chinguapin Park**, **Four Mile Run Park**, **Joseph Hensley Park**, **Holmes Run Park System**, and **Simpson Stadium Park**.¹ Through the Citywide Large Park Improvement Plan, RPCA intends to determine budgeting priorities and recommendations for both short and long-term incremental improvements, ensuring that public parks serve Alexandria’s needs now and into the future.

The Plan is segmented into seven sections, the first addressing the shared vision, objectives and recommendations for all large parks, followed by individual plans for each of the six parks. Each Park Improvement Plan contains background, public feedback, recommendations and cost estimates. **Packaged together, these individual plans strive to meet a vision to improve existing open space, impacting the health of Alexandria’s natural environment and its people.**

¹ This Office of Historic Alexandria is currently leading a community-driven management plan for Fort Ward Park.

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“The first consideration in preparing this plan is how best to provide the types of areas and the kind of facilities most needed by the several neighborhoods. No one park can meet all the park and recreation needs of the City. In preparing the plan it must be decided what program to follow and what special action to take which will establish a park system that fits in with the means that may be afforded. The program should be adequate to answer the deficiency existing, reasonable to attain the objectives desired, and possible to maintain the improvements created.”

- A Park Planning Program for Alexandria, The Planning Commission, City of Alexandria, VA, September 3, 1940



Holmes Run Park

DRAFT, Janu

There are many reasons why we are planning for improvements to our Citywide Parks. First, The City is growing increasingly dense and land is less available for acquisition of new open space, therefore, we must take full advantage of the parks we have and ensure that they offer the variety of recreational needs that a dense city requires. This includes opportunities for passive relaxation, organized sports, early childhood development, family fun, and individual athletic activities.

We must also make investments in the parks to simply maintain them for years to come. Many of the park fixtures, such as utilities and furniture, and features, such as playgrounds and dog parks, are reaching the end of their useful life. Yet, rather than merely replace them in-kind, we need to determine whether these are the appropriate mix of uses and in the right location. Throughout this planning process we asked the questions: **Does this park meet today's needs and does it meet tomorrow's needs? We then considered, if it doesn't, how can we improve the Park so that it does?**

To determine the needs of the parks, we approached the plan in two ways: 1) an active public outreach strategy and 2) by conducting a statistically accurate Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (see appendix for findings). The public outreach on this project included twelve public workshops (two for each park), online surveys, and "mobile workshops" which entailed staff taking surveys and draft plans to park users at events, adjacent businesses, community centers, and in the parks themselves. We assumed that those that use the parks have the best knowledge of what improvements the sites need. Secondly, RPCA, working with a consultant, conducted a 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment by sending a survey to demographically and geographically representative households. With over 600 responses for each year, we can confirm that the results are accurate in depicting residents' needs.

Using this dynamic approach of both qualitative and quantitative research, we prioritized the improvements. Given current financial uncertainties, the Department knows that it will not receive funding for every Capital Improvement Program request that it puts forward. There is not an expectation that all park plans can be paid for at once. Instead, this plan uses citizen input and considers other external considerations to determine how to address park improvement incrementally over time. Therefore, most of the recommendations in the plan can be implemented independent of other projects.

If we do not act, we risk having our Parks deteriorate and not serve residents outdoor recreational needs, a great loss to the historical economic investment made in these resource-rich public spaces. This plan is important because it strives to improve existing open space, which impacts both the health of Alexandria's natural environment and its people. The City's Strategic Plan aims to ensure that the City's natural and built environment is healthy and that its residents are thriving. In the broadest sense, by implementing the recommendations in this plan, the City can move towards meeting these goals by providing the best outdoor recreational opportunities and natural resources possible for its residents. At a more micro-level, and as explained on the following pages, this plan aims to meet the following objectives:

- 1. Increase accessibility to the City's large parks and their facilities**
- 2. Design public spaces that meet multiple community needs and balance passive and active uses**
- 3. Steward and cultivate the parks' many natural resource assets**
- 4. Strengthen the network of Citywide Parks and its role in connecting the community.**

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Objective 1

Increase accessibility to the City's Large Parks and their facilities:

Most of the citywide parks are located within residential neighborhoods and also support citywide recreational programs. Therefore, they serve as primary parks for many of Alexandria's residents. Park users travel by foot, car, bike and bus to visit but the lack of formal and inviting entrances to the parks is a barrier for current and potential visitors. All entrances should be brought up to standards for universal accessibility. Well-designed access points are needed to better connect the parks with their surroundings and increase pedestrians use of the space.

Access within the park's also need improvement. Each citywide park accommodates a diversity of recreational uses, however, these activities are poorly connected and sporadically scattered throughout the parks. The circuitous layout of the citywide parks reflects years of piecemeal planning. Throughout the community process, participants expressed concerns with safety and visibility in some of the parks, particularly because of many inaccessible or obscure pathways.

1.1 Improve Park Circulation

Poor circulation is a ubiquitous concern in the citywide park system. Visitors too often feel overwhelmed, secluded, or unsafe due to the lack of connectivity in the parks. In order to establish an enjoyable park experience, different park activities must be integrated by a safe and clear set of paths.

- Design pathways to meet and exceed the 2010 ADA Standards.
- Promote park programming and activities that are accessible to all.
- Install standard wayfinding signage throughout the sites that promotes park resources and is easily identifiable and clear for all park users
- Develop sufficient and easily navigable vehicular paths and parking lots to support athletic programs in an urban environment

1.2 Improve Park Entrances

Many park users enter the park wherever convenient due to the lack of attractive, formalized entrances. Some of these "desire lines" can be a hazard to users or the park's natural resources. Paths need clear and safe gateways connecting them to their surroundings communities.

- Increase the number of welcoming and universally accessible entry points.
- Enhance linkages with public transportation, bike and pedestrian routes.
- Provide a standard number of park benches and bike racks at each park entrance

1.3 Linkages

A Citywide Parks trail system could dramatically increase connectivity within the city, making it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to move through the City and access destinations in different neighborhoods.

- Link citywide parks with pedestrian, bicycle, and trail systems
- Link citywide parks to other regional, neighborhood and pocket parks.
- Initiate public outreach to share citywide park opportunities to residents and welcome their use of the citywide parks.

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Objective 2

Design public spaces that meet multiple community needs and balance passive and active uses:

Throughout the community engagement process, the City garnered over 600 survey responses and facilitated a number of workshops where many Alexandria citizens shared their park needs and input. The needs covered a wide range of issues and especially varied in citywide parks that have a number of well-organized and specific user groups. While the needs of different user groups seem divergent, they may all be addressed comprehensively. With an organized approach to hearing and acting on community input, we can balance the different interests of park users and collaborate to determine priorities for park improvements. In order to make these parks accessible and attractive to all of Alexandria's citizens, park space must be designed to include a range of both passive and active recreational uses, while also respecting the parks' natural resources.

2.1 Match Space with Community Needs

This plan's community engagement process is just one means to hear the needs of park users. There must be a long-term process for listening to residents needs and making park planning accessible to all. A park is successful if it has utility and value to its users.

- Conduct citywide parks and recreation needs assessment every two years
- Develop an effective and organized method for continuously hearing community's desired use of the park and responding to the changing needs.
- Design spaces and programs that are contextually relevant to residents

2.2 Balance Passive & Active Uses

At times, certain parks become dominated by organized sport activities, at the expense of including other individual recreational opportunities. Yet, both the 2011 and 2013 Needs Assessment indicate that the majority of park users desire opportunities partake in individual park uses. More user needs would be addressed by creating space for both passive and active recreation and integrating those spaces into one cohesive plan.

- Improve and create spaces that accommodate sports participants and spectators.
- Improve fields and facilities for active users.
- Create spaces for passive enjoyment of the bucolic character of parks.
- Improve picnic and congregating areas.
- Install infrastructure necessary for large special events
- Promote community health by designing park features that support active living.

2.3 Follow the RPCA Cost Recovery Model to guide an appropriate balance of fee based and unmonitored uses

In 2013, City Council approved a Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Model specific to Alexandria. The model drew from citizen focus groups and the 2011 Needs Assessment to guide the recreation fee schedule. The model recommended that programs with the highest community benefit receive the highest subsidy while those with a strong individual benefit receive little or no subsidy.

- Ensure that park areas with the highest public benefit, such as passive open space and natural areas, receive the most tax subsidy.
- Invest in areas that can generate user fee revenue, and therefore, help subsidize the community benefits.
- Seek implementation strategies that reduce capital and maintenance expenditures.



Objective 3

Steward and cultivate the parks' many natural and cultural resource assets:

All of the citywide parks have natural features that are rare to urbanized environments. Part of what makes Alexandria such a unique place is that it contains open space where its residents can connect with and enjoy nature. Holmes Run, Brenman and Boothe, and Four Mile are all located close to water and a few contain precious natural resources. Each of the parks has its own set of natural resources that add value to the city and provide opportunities for environmental education in the urban landscape. Many of the Citywide Parks also have historical associations and contain resources that highlight significant historical events reflecting the diverse lifestyles and activities of Alexandria's past inhabitants. Identification of these cultural resources enrich the visitor experience and connect with the past. Through best practices and low impact design, we must conserve the city's valuable natural and cultural resources in order to retain their importance for the generations of Alexandrians to come.

3.1 Natural and Resources

In order to create favorable conditions for Alexandria's broad diversity of habitats, the plans for the citywide parks must work in concert with the City's natural resource management plans. This includes protecting valuable wetland and water resources, and ensuring continued ecological health through best practices, invasive species management, and protection of indigenous vegetation and habitat.

- Explore and implement best practices for energy efficiency including a more effective water management system and renewable energy technology
- Plant trees of appropriate native species to increase the park canopy and produce a multi-aged and diverse tree community, per the Urban Forestry Master Plan
- A variety of BMP's to improve water quality and meet regulatory requirements, including

the pollutant reduction goals to clean up the Chesapeake Bay

- Better distribute trash receptacles and add permanent recycling containers to meet Eco-City goals
- Initiate community outreach to educate public on Eco-City goals related to the environment and park stewardship
- Encourage Friends of the Parks groups and partnerships with organizations to co-maintain and support the park
- Use best practices for Storm Water Management in order to meet the reduction goals of the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load
- Increase opportunities for community gardening, per the City's Community Garden Guidelines (in draft form as of writing of this Plan)
- Adhere to RPCA's Environmental Sustainability and Management System (in draft form as of writing of this Plan).

3.2 Historical and Archaeological Resources

The plans for Citywide Parks must take into account the City's stewardship role in the preservation of cultural resources. This includes identification and evaluation of areas with historical significance so that information about the past can be recovered and resources can be protected and interpreted.

- Research the history of each park and the potential for discovery of archeological resources.
- Conduct archeological investigations, as needed, to identify locations of significant resources prior to development, per the City's Archeology Protection Code
- Integrate the history and archaeology of the park enhancements through the inclusion of interpretive elements.

Objective 4

Strengthen the network of Citywide Parks and its role in connecting the community.

The citywide parks draw residents from all over Alexandria and set the stage for a multitude of activities. With so much converging at one site, each park has the potential to be a social incubator for its surrounding neighborhoods. The parks could embody and express the unique story of their primary users through local art and events. In addition, the citywide parks system, as a whole, has the built-in capacity for connecting different communities across Alexandria. Those who use the citywide parks meet people from other city neighborhoods as well as visitors from outside the city. Therefore, the citywide parks system has the potential to significantly increase the physical and social connectivity within Alexandria. A network linking the various citywide parks not only helps Alexandrians access different destinations and neighborhoods of the city; it also creates opportunities for Alexandrians to meet one another and build a larger, more diverse community.



4.1 Community Development

The citywide park system can become a vibrant microcosm of Alexandria life. Each park is located in a different setting within Alexandria with its own unique history, neighborhood and culture. Individually, the parks should embody and showcase their surrounding community assets.



- Provide opportunities for public art in each of the large parks in areas identified by the Office of Arts' Public Art Master Plan (in progress)
- Invite a diverse array of community events and venues to take place in citywide parks
- Establish themes within each park based on its history, connection to natural resources, and/or unique neighborhood character
- Provide public spaces that facilitate community gathering and places for interaction
- Create opportunities for residents and local businesses to become involved in park stewardship and planning processes

Methodology & Navigating the Plan

Each of the following plans include four sections including background, community feedback, recommendations, and implementation. RPCA staff used a multi-pronged approach to gather information and develop these sections, as follows:

Background

The six parks each have a rich history and meaning within their adjacent neighborhoods. In Spring and Summer 2012, staff reviewed existing plans and documents, gathered qualitative data from City Staff, and conducted site observations and park inventory. The Office of Historic Alexandria provided background on each of the Park's historic use and evolution into a Park. In some cases RPCA staff also conducted oral interviews with long-time park advocates and neighbors.

Community Feedback

To gather a sense of the Park characters, RPCA staff observed park uses during various times of day, spoke to park users while on-site. RPCA staff then collected park information from the Community. RPCA held a public workshop from September 28 through December 3, 2012 for each park to discuss park needs, distributed an online survey asking for feedback, and placed hard copy surveys in boxes located at entrances to the park and in the mailboxes of adjacent neighborhood homes. The survey asked park users to identify their usual point of access into the park, the mode of transportation they use to get there, their typical park activities, what they like about the park, and what areas of the park need improvement. Survey participants also prioritized their improvement needs. Over 585 Alexandria residents responded and 45 attended workshops.¹



¹ RPCA acknowledges that results of the workshop and survey were not statistically accurate. Rather, the responses are from those who saw the survey and chose to participate. While this is a sample of Park users, it is not representative of all users. As an example, through sports permitting, we know that many more soccer and ballfield users visit the Park than are reported through the survey. For this reason, the information was supplemented with site observation and additional data to inform recommendations in the Park Improvement Plans.

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Recommendations & Implementation Strategy

To develop draft plans and recommendations Park Planning Staff used information collected from the existing conditions and community input to create draft plans. Information was gathered based on the following set of questions: Did we hear you? Have we considered the needs of everyone who uses the park? What else can be improved? What is the priority? In Spring 2013, staff presented the draft plans to the community for feedback at interactive public workshops, local business and community centers with “mobile workshops,” flyering neighborhoods, and using an online survey. Since that time, staff refined the plans to represent the community comments and then developed an implementation strategy for each recommendation, which includes a cost, priority rank, and proposed timeframe. Staff worked with an external cost consultant, Pennoni Associates, to ensure accuracy and account for all aspects of a project, including potential soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental and permitting work costs). These cost estimates do not include operating costs. Prior to the implementation of any recommendation, operating costs, if any, must be considered. The appendix contains complete cost estimates by line item cost for each recommendation. The example below explains how this information is displayed in the plan and the reason behind the implementation strategy:

READING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The number to the left of each recommendation corresponds to the legend on the Park Plan.



3

Renovate open passive use area

This area is one of the largest non-programmed spaces. Children and adults use this space for pick-up games, practices, and lounging. Retaining it as a passive use area will help to balance the different activities in the park and provide recreational opportunities for non-sports team users. Increased maintenance and site amenities can help facilitate these uses.

The estimated cost range (in 2013 dollars) shown for each recommendation includes soft costs if the project were implemented independent of other projects. Estimates in the back of each Park Plan show a cost scenario in which all the recommendations are implemented together.



ESTIMATED COST: \$78,000 - \$95,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3 - 10 years



The priority for each recommendation is shown as “low,” “medium,” or “high.” RPCA determined these rankings based upon three factors: 1) park user safety, 2) community prioritization feedback and the results of the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, 3) life span of existing facility.



RPCA proposed a timeline for each recommendation by considering the project priority, the project cost with relation to the Department budget and contingent upon the Capital Improvement Plan, and the construction sequencing of recommendation amongst other park projects.

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Recommendations for All Citywide Parks

Throughout the Community Feedback process, RPCA found that many of the existing conditions and improvement needs were consistent in all six parks. To efficiently use resources, RPCA recommends addressing the following issues in coordination:

Improve Wayfinding throughout the Park System

Throughout the parks, various welcome, rules and regulation, and historical/educational signs are scattered about. There is no consistent graphic conformity to them and the locations are often haphazard. Furthermore, as pointed out through community feedback, park users are often lost in the Parks, particularly when trying to find athletic facilities. Developing a wayfinding program through the parks, coordinated with the City's newly adopted Wayfinding guidelines and graphic standards, can help orient and direct park users while also giving the parks a tidier look. Better placed and clearer rules and regulations signs can also help educate the Park users on appropriate park behavior.

ESTIMATED COST: \$80,000 - \$100,000 (includes all 6 parks)

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

Provide Improved Trash Receptacle Locations and Recycling Program

Many of the trash receptacles in the Parks are in locations difficult for sanitation trucks to access and off the typical path for park users. Some of the trash receptacles are also in poor condition and not standard. Standardizing the trash receptacles and moving them to locations that make more sense for usability and maintenance will help the parks look cleaner and better control litter. In addition, recycling receptacles are needed in all six parks in order to support Alexandria's Eco-City principles. (See the appendix for proposed receptacle locations).

ESTIMATED COST: N/A

PRIORITY: Low

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ Years

Include Universal Accessibility in all Plans

The City and RPCA are committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are able to enjoy full and equal access to all of the City's parks and their amenities. Any renovation or park improvement proposed in the plan incorporates designs that meet or exceed the U.S. Department of Justice's 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. In some cases, RPCA has prioritized projects in the plan that have particularly poor access. In addition, RPCA will utilize the expertise of the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities for support and guidance on accessibility improvements to park pathways and facilities.

ESTIMATED COST: Included in all other cost estimates.

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: N/A

Locate Public Art in Collaboration with the Office of the Arts Public Art Master Plan

In 2012, the Alexandria City Council adopted a policy to grow the City's public art into an inspired and engaging program that reflects the City's unique history, people, cultural identity, and future aspirations. To support this growth, the City has commissioned the development of a Public Art Master Plan. The Public Art Master Plan, currently underway, will set priorities for the location and funding of projects which may include the Citywide Park sites.

ESTIMATED COST: N/A

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: Underway

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Develop Traffic Demand Management Plans for the Parks

In the parks with athletic facilities, particularly Simpson, Four Mile Run Park, Hensley, and Brenman, parking is a big concern for participants, spectators, and park neighbors. Many of the fields are used by more teams at the same time than the adjacent facilities were designed to accommodate. When the fields are not in use, however, the parking lots appear as under used pavement in open space. As a result, in May 2013, the Park and Recreation Commission approved an Athletic Facilities Community Allocation Policy that includes Athletic Field Parking Design Standards (Section C, see appendix), providing parking ratios per players on the field. In addition to implementing these guidelines, the individual park plans indicate where parking lots can be renovated or re-stripped.

ESTIMATED COST: N/A

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME:

Upgrade Utilities in the Parks to Support Park Uses, including Special Events

In order to proceed with any major park renovations or improvements, the City must first identify any supporting infrastructure and utility upgrades at the sites. This includes water, electric, gas and storm sewer. Many of the existing utilities are at the end of their useful life and/or cannot support additional services. Additionally, improved utilities will provide core pieces of special event infrastructure required to host large and small public festivals and events. An initial inventory of the sites will help determine what needs replacement, when, and how it may impact park improvements.

ESTIMATED COST: \$100,000 - \$150,000 for upgrades per park

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

Install Additional Bicycle Racks in the Parks

Many park visitors bike through the parks but because there are limited bike accommodations they do not stop to enjoy the open space. Other park-goers drive when they could bike. Adding additional bike racks would encourage people to change their mode of transportation when visiting parks. This recommendation is applicable to all six parks and the racks could be installed simultaneously in all of them.

Per the 2008 Alexandria Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Master Plan, the “inverted U” type bicycle rack is the City standard. The location for the racks will be highly visible, mainly at park entrances or adjacent to major uses. The number of bike racks at each park will depend upon the specific location.

ESTIMATED COST: \$25,000 - \$40,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

Evaluate Archaeological and Preservation Needs

To ensure that significant information is not lost as a result of any of the improvement plans, the soft costs for each recommendation include archeological exploration. If significant resources are discovered, the City will seek to complete a Resource Management Plan as a part of the plan implementation process.

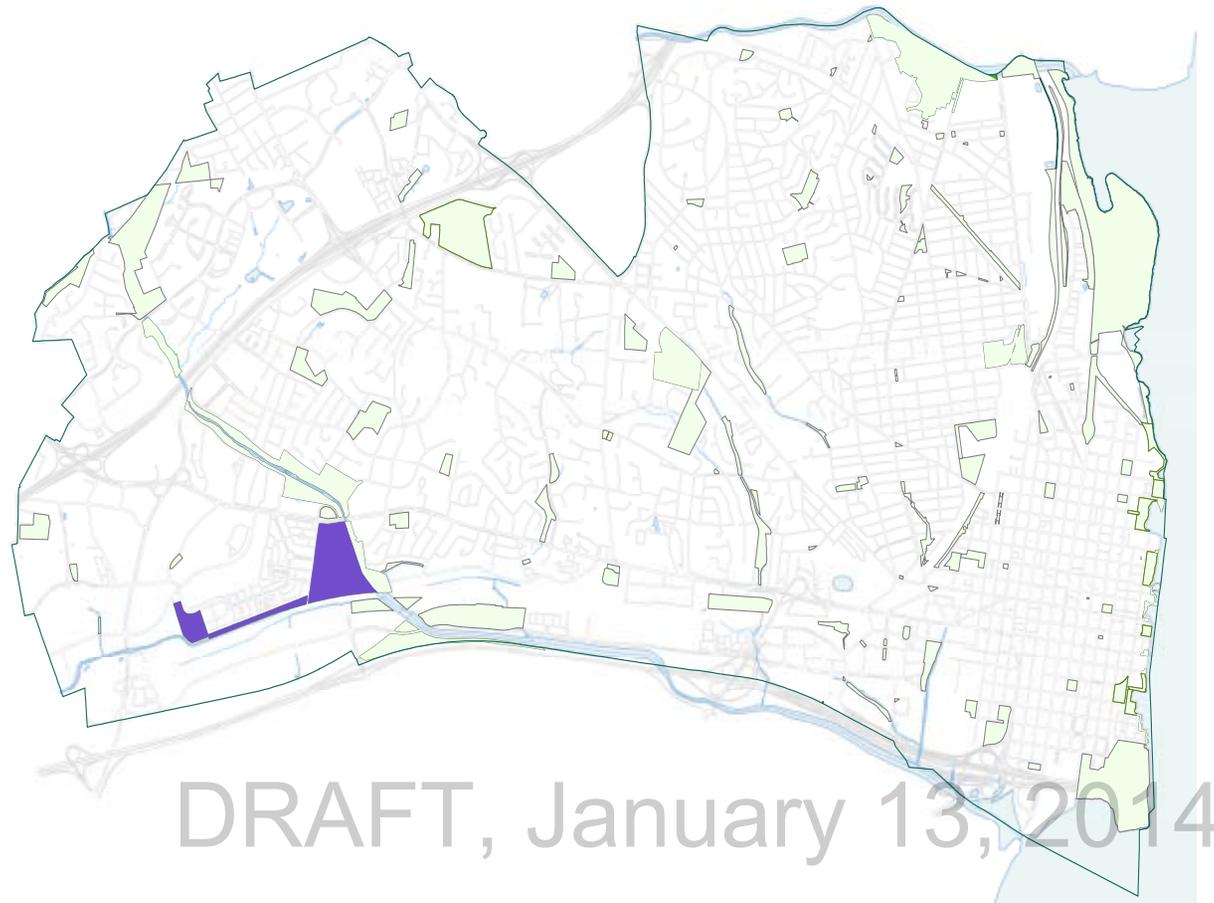
ESTIMATED COST: Costs included in each Park Plan.

PRIORITY: N/A

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: Before preparation of the Preliminary Plan for each Park.

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BEN BRENNAN PARK
ARMISTEAD L. BOOTHE PARK
CAMERON STATION LINEAR PARK



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Background

Ben Brenman (48.33 acres) and Armistead L. Boothe (10.81 acres) Parks are very popular destinations for many people who live in the West End residential areas, as well as sports users from around the City who travel to the Park to use the athletic fields and/or attend special events. A linear trail, Cameron Station Linear Park, connects the two parks along the south side of Cameron Station. Throughout the 19th century, both Parks were a part of property known as the “Meadows,” a 254-acre marshland. In the 20th century, the land was cultivated into agricultural fields and then used as the location for the Cameron Station Quartermaster Depot by the US Army Quartermaster Corps from 1941 until 1996.

In 1992, City Council adopted the Cameron Station Coordinated Development District (CCD) that included Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks, in conjunction with Cameron Station. Both sections of parkland were conveyed to the City of Alexandria through the Federal Land to Park Program of the United States Department of the Interior for use by the general public. In 1996, the sites were re-developed into parks as part of the CDD. The CDD plan also included the construction of the Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School adjacent to Boothe Park.

The City named each Park after esteemed Alexandrians whose civic activism enriched the quality of life for residents of the community. Armistead L. Boothe was a native Alexandrian who served as a special assistant in the United States Office of Attorney General (1934-1936) and as a City Attorney of Alexandria (1938-1943). Boothe was a strong advocate for public school integration in the 1950s. Colonel Ben Brenman contributed his time and talent as an Alexandrian activist for over 30 years and was involved in many public projects, including the acquisition of the Brenman and Boothe parklands. Now the care and dedication of these two men are imbued in the Brenman and Boothe Park system, a well-liked public space that will continue to serve as a haven for recreation in a densely populated, highly urbanized, area of the city.

City of Alexandria residents enjoy both Parks and their facilities throughout the day and night. As the Park Planning process revealed, the most common use of the Parks is “relaxing.” Individuals and families of Cameron Station and the Wakefield Tarleton neighborhood walk around the pond, visit the playground, and relax on the benches. On Saturdays, the Brenman Park Farmers Market is bustling, bringing in park visitors from all neighborhoods of the West End. The fields are also very active; the artificial turf rectangular field and baseball field in Brenman and baseball field at Boothe have lights and

Christiana's neighborhood park



Christiana Cole is an Alexandria native who attends Hampton University in Hampton, VA. Having grown up on the West End, Christiana often comes to Brenman Park to run by herself or with friends. She enjoys Brenman Park for its quiet open space and neighborhood feel, which makes it a comfortable place for her to run, walk, or relax with friends and family.

RPCA regularly programs them until 10:00pm.

The planning process for this plan identified few areas of the Parks in need of improvement. In general, park visitors find the sites to be great assets to the City. However, the Brenman Park dog and picnic area, south of Cameron Run is in need of improvement. This area of the Park is located in an isolated area, over a bridge and behind dense trees and shrubs. Its location makes it difficult for Police to regularly surveil. Dog park users feel unsafe walking to the secluded area, particularly when visiting after work hours in the Fall and Winter. Moreover, the picnic area does not have facilities to attract families to rent the shelter, and the sand volleyball courts are rarely used.

Another area of the Parks that users identified as needing improvement is Boothe Park playground, which serves both children of nearby residences and the students of Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School. At time of writing (2013), its play

equipment is outdated and far too spread out. Participants in this planning process desired newer play equipment for a range of different ages grouped in areas that are accessible to the children of the surrounding area. Understanding the upgrade needs at this site prior to the Park Planning process, RPCA previously slated the Boothe playground for renovation in fiscal year 2013, including new rubber safety surfacing and play equipment and consolidation of equipment. Construction is expected in 2014.

The Brenman stormwater management pond provides a unique water asset to the park while also serving as a stormwater quality basin. The pond collects rainwater runoff traveling through the city storm sewers and then treats the water by trapping it and allowing the pollutants to settle out before the water is discharged into Backlick Run and on to the Potomac River. The small ponded area west of the pedestrian bridge is designed to function as a forebay and capture trash and sediment prior to it entering the main

pond area. However, as many respondents noted, the presence of trash is unsightly and often does find its way into the larger pond. In addition, the trash rack located on the inlet pipe in the forebay is difficult to clean and maintain.

Furthermore, while some park users find them fun to watch, the flocks of geese that saunter around the pond often create a host of problems for the maintenance staff.





Community Feedback

From September through early December 2012, RPCA solicited input on the existing conditions and possible future uses for Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks.

Together information, RPCA held a public workshop to discuss park needs, distributed an online survey asking for feedback, and placed hard copy surveys in boxes located at entrances to the park and in the mailboxes of adjacent neighborhood homes. Staff also visited events and local businesses to hold “mobile workshops.” The survey asked park users to identify their usual point of access into the parks, the mode of transportation they use to get there, their typical park activities, what they like about the park, and what areas of the park need improvement. Survey participants also prioritized their improvement needs.

RPCA received 78 completed surveys. Of those surveyed, 52 participants lived in the 22304 zip code. Ten lived in the 22314 zip code; nine lived in 22302 and fewer than 5 participants lived in each of the other Alexandria zip codes or outside City limits. The majority of those who visit do so daily (28%) or weekly (34%).

This is what we heard:

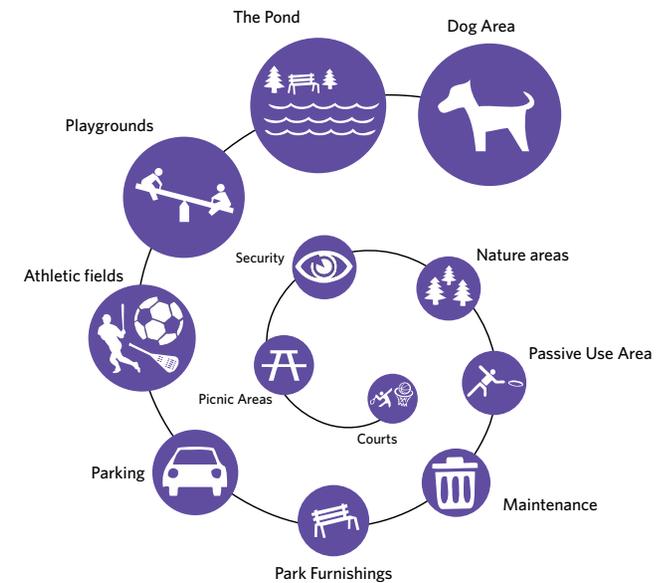
Fifty-one percent walk to either Brenman or Boothe Park; 42% drive and only 8% bike. This

high number of pedestrians demonstrates how Brenman/Boothe is considered a large park with a strong neighborhood use, attracting leisurely activity. It also implies the need to review safer pedestrian and cyclist access throughout the Parks. The high number of drivers is likely associated with the athletic fields, though many park users living outside of the Cameron Station neighborhood also drive to the Parks to walk or use other park features.

When asked, “What do you do in the Park?” the majority of participants stated that they go for unorganized, passive park uses. The highest use was to walk (18%). Another popular answer was “relax” (12%). These activities are multi-generational and can occur individually or in vary small groups. The other responses were very closely ranked, including athletic field, dog area, and playground use, emphasizing the Parks multi-use nature. The only two activities that received responses of less than one percent were “use the basketball courts” and “use the volleyball courts.”

In answering, “What do you like about the Park,” participants overwhelmingly identified the open green space and setting of the park. All of the comments were emphatically positive, citing many reasons why people enjoy the park regularly. In particular, many respondents noted that there is

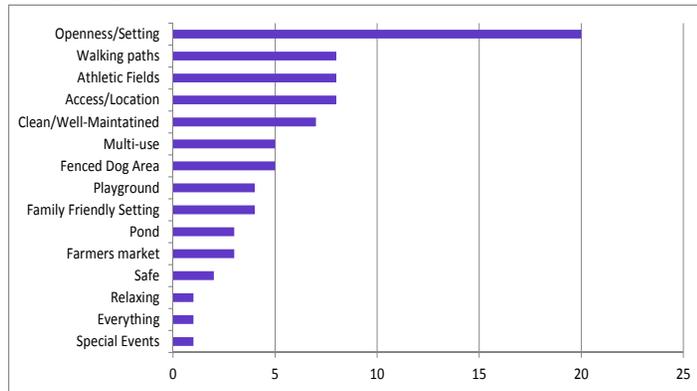
What needs improvement in Brenman and Boothe Parks?



The highest priority is shown as the largest circle; the lowest priority is the smallest circle. Priorities are based on the number of responses to needed improvements and then weighted by how participants prioritized their answers

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What do you like about the Park?



something for everyone in these Parks - children, adults, and pets.

There are some consistent themes throughout the various methods of community feedback. These include:

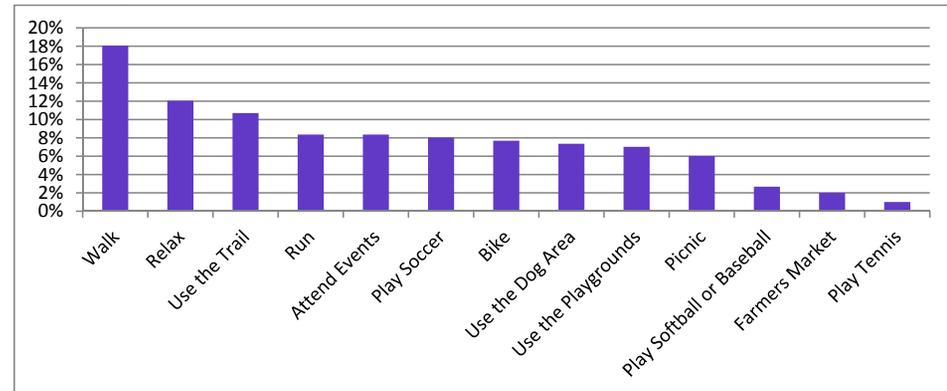
Dog Area

Participants in the workshop and the survey named the dog area and its surrounding landscapes as Brenman Park's highest improvement need. This particular area of the Park is very isolated and dog park users feel unsafe walking to such a hidden location, particularly when visiting after work hours in the Fall and Winter.

Stormwater Pond

The Brenman Pond is a working stormwater retention pond, fed by rainwater traveling through the City storm sewers, the pond treats the water with aeration fountains before the water works its way to the Potomac River. The system is designed

What do you do in the Park?



within the forebay to capture any trash traveling with the water before it makes its way into the main pond. However, as many respondents noted, trash often escapes the filters and the forebay enters the pond. The trash trap is difficult to clean and maintain.

Boothe Playground

Many survey respondents stated that the play equipment in Boothe Playground is outdated and spread out around the Park.

Wayfinding Signage

The Brenman and Boothe Park system is large and many people have navigating around the Park and to certain activities. As suggested in the workshop, directional wayfinding signage would help visitors find their way around the Park and give a stronger identity to the Park through coordinated graphics.

Park Furniture

According to the survey, one of the highest Park uses is "relaxing." To support this activity, respondents and workshop participants commented on the need for additional park benches, as well as more bike racks.

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The Plan

KEYED LEGEND

1. IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO HOLMES RUN TRAILS
2. RESERVE SPACE TO ADDRESS LONG-RANGE NEED FOR COMMUNITY CENTER
3. RENOVATE OPEN PASSIVE USE AREA
4. INCREASE BICYCLE PARKING
5. RETROFIT CAMERON STATION POND
6. OPEN VIEWSHEDS
7. RELOCATE MAINTENANCE BUILDING AND PROVIDE VEHICULAR ACCESS BRIDGE
8. ADD TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AND SHADE STRUCTURES
9. STUDY FEASIBILITY OF BIKE-FRIENDLY PATH
10. CONSOLIDATE FIVE SMALL PLAYGROUNDS INTO TWO LARGE PLAYGROUNDS
11. PROVIDE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE ACROSS TRACKS TO EISENHOWER AVENUE
12. HOLD LOCATION FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE SCHOOL GARDEN
13. PROVIDE DOG PARK LIGHTING (PUSH-BUTTON ACTIVATED, TIMED) AND EXPAND DOG PARK TO INCLUDE DOG EXERCISE FEATURES
14. LIGHT BRIDGE EXIT (MOTION-SENSOR ACTIVATED, TIMED)
15. RENOVATE COURTS TO INCLUDE MULTI-USE SPACES
16. INSTALL NATURAL PLAY FEATURES TO CREATE PICNIC ACTIVITY CENTER
17. PLANT TREES TO CLOSE GAP LEADING TO RAIL TRACKS
18. EXPLORE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION OF A MARKER TO HIGHLIGHT THE HISTORY OF CAMERON STATION (LOCATION TBD)



GRAPHIC KEY



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Recommendations & Implementation Strategy



The pedestrian crossing from Ben Brenman Park to Duke Street is not visible and does not connect through the Park.



The original 1996 Park Plan identifies the Northwest corner of the Park as a location for a community center.



The open space north of the ballfields is used for passive activity, but the surface is not high quality.



There are a limited number of bicycle racks at the park entrances.

1

Improve connections to Holmes Run Trails

The City can strengthen the connection between Holmes Run Greenway and Ben Brenman Park. A more pronounced pathway along Duke Street with pedestrian traffic controls will significantly improve pedestrian access from Brenman Park to the Holmes Run Trail. An improved path with clearer signage and more accentuated park entrances will help to publicize the parks to people along Duke Street.

ESTIMATED COST: \$18,000 - \$22,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

2

Reserve space for possible long-range need for Community Center

The West End as a whole is in need of indoor/outdoor active recreational facilities. This center would exist for community use and would likely offer services similar to those at other city recreation centers. A senior center was identified in the original 1996 Park Plan, but not implemented. Any new project of this type in a park requires a CDD/DSUP amendment, including significant community input.

ESTIMATED COST: N/A PRIORITY: Low PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ Years

3

Renovate open passive use area

This area is one of the largest non-programmed spaces in Brenman Park. Children and adults use this space for pick-up games, practices, and lounging. Retaining it as a passive use area will help balance the different activities in the park and provide recreational opportunities for non-sports team users. Increased maintenance and site amenities can help facilitate these uses.

ESTIMATED COST: \$78,000 - \$95,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 years (for renovation only, not maintenance)

4

Increase bicycle parking

Bike racks installed at each entrance to the park will make it more convenient for park users to bike to Ben Brenman Park. With improved connections to the Holmes Run paths to the north, Ben Brenman Park could become a destination for recreational cycling through the West End.

ESTIMATED COST: \$2,400 - \$4,800 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1 - 3 years

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The pond is a working stormwater filtration system.



A bridge leads to the South side of the Park, which is hidden behind overgrowth.



The maintenance shed along Deer Run Court is in very poor condition and is an eyesore to park users.



Respondents to the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment had a high demand for fitness equipment, like the chin up bars recently installed in Holmes Run Park, above.

5

Retrofit Cameron Station Pond

The small ponded area west of the pedestrian bridge is designed to function as a forebay and capture trash prior to it entering the main pond area. The forebay system is designed to capture any trash traveling with the water before it makes its way into the larger pond. However, as mentioned throughout the planning process for this plan, it is the public's perception (and desire) that the trash should be intercepted prior to the forebay, preventing it from entering the pond altogether. Upgrades to improve pond efficiency and trash control are needed to keep the pond clean and to perform the required water quality improvement function. Educational signage can help explain the environmental benefits of the stormwater pond.

ESTIMATED COST: **\$3,500,000**

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

6

Open viewsheds

As stated in the surveys and community workshops, many park users are reluctant to cross the bridge to the far south of Brenman because the area is secluded from the rest of the park. Other park users are unaware that this area exists. Opening clear viewsheds at each end of the bridge will better integrate the South area with the rest of the park and improve use of the space.

ESTIMATED COST: \$100,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

7

Relocate maintenance building and provide vehicular access bridge

With the maintenance building south of Cameron Run connected by a vehicular access bridge, park staff can easily navigate maintenance vehicles through the entire park and equipment would be out of view from the majority of the park users. Locating the building on the other side of the stream will also provide a security measure by having employees keep "eyes on the Park" in the more secluded area. The new building would have the sufficient room and facilities that the current one lacks.

ESTIMATED COST: \$500,000 - \$675,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

8

Add trail improvements and shade structures

More trail features such as seating and adult fitness stations, such as the new equipment in Holmes Run Park shown on the left, will attract people to the area of Ben Brenman Park that connects to the Cameron Station Linear Park. Walkers will be able to track distance by following mile markers and then rest and enjoy a break from the sun under proposed shade structures along the trail.

ESTIMATED COST: \$52,000 - \$81,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3 - 10 years



Many survey respondents were interested in upgrading the Cameron Station Linear Park to be more bicycle friendly.



RPCA is currently upgrading playground equipment in Boothe Park.



Boothe Park is parallel with Eisenhower Avenue but is separated by Cameron Run.



The community garden at George Washington Middle School, shown above, is managed as a Co-op.



The Brenman Dog Park is isolated and can not be viewed from the rest of the Park.

9

Study feasibility of bike-friendly path

The trail along Cameron Station Linear Park needs to be re-paved and brought to standards with clear directional and informational signage. The City will consider the feasibility of making the trail a bike-friendly path, since its current width is too narrow to accommodate two-way bicycle travel.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Include in 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

10

Consolidate five small playgrounds into two large playgrounds

The Department’s Playground Renovation Program is currently renovating Boothe playground and bringing it into compliance with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards for Public Playgrounds. The renovated playgrounds will include rubber safety surfacing, new play equipment, and accessibility improvements. Playground renovation is scheduled to be completed by Summer of 2014.

ESTIMATED COST: N/A PRIORITY: N/A PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: IN PROGRESS

11

Provide Multi-modal bridge across tracks to Eisenhower Avenue

With this multi-modal bridge over the flume, park users could access Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks via the Van Dorn Metro Station. This new connection to Metro would also improve the commutes of West End residents living around the parks.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Multi-modal bridge included in Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan and will be further studied in the Eisenhower West Plan

12

Hold location for possible future School Garden

This garden would be the only one in the Brenman and Boothe Park system and provide an educational opportunity for the Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School community. It may also be used by the public if managed in a Co-Op system similar to George Washington Middle School’s garden (shown on left).

SUGGESTED ACTION: Joint Community & School led project

13

Provide dog park lighting (push-button activated, timed) and expand dog park to include dog exercise features

With the timed energy-efficient lighting, the dog park will become a safer, more comfortable environment for evening use, especially in Winter months. Dog park users will be able to activate the push-button lighting up until the park officially closes at 10:00pm. The push button will make the lighting more energy efficient as lights will only be on when the area is in use.

ESTIMATED COST: \$64,000 - \$96,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3 - 10 Years



The pathway to the South side of the park is very dark at night making it unsafe for those using the dog park and other features.



The existing volleyball courts, left, are unused. Sport courts will attract more users to the area.



Natural play features, such as those shown above, can attract families to rent and use the park shelter in the South side of the Park.



Gaps in the forested area create unsafe entrances into hidden locations that are often difficult for the police to survey.

14

Light bridge and pathway (motion-sensor activated, timed)

The bridge and path lights along with the lights on the dog park will allow park users to safely access and exit the area of the Park to the south of Cameron Run. A motion sensor system will be energy efficient and also alert police and officials when the area is in use.

ESTIMATED COST: \$9,800 - \$14,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3 - 10 Years

15

Renovate courts to include multi-use spaces

Park users can choose to play one of the multiple sports that the new hard surface courts will accommodate, as shown in the example on the left. These new multi-use courts will economize on space and attract park users to the South Picnic Area, which is currently under used.

ESTIMATED COST: \$200,000 - \$300,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3 - 10 Years

16

Install natural play features to create picnic activity center

Natural play features, such as those shown on left, will enhance the picnic area and attract more family oriented uses and community events. The new picnic activity center will have a variety of recreational opportunities for kids and adults.

ESTIMATED COST: \$11,000 - \$15,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3 - 10 years

17

Plant trees to close gap leading to rail tracks

Planting trees or plants of appropriate native species in the gap near the picnic area will add tree canopy to the City while also keeping people from entering the forested area through openings.

ESTIMATED COST: \$3,500 - \$4,500 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

18

Explore design and installation of a marker to highlight the history of Cameron Station

Placement of an interpretive marker will educate residents about the area's history and enrich the visitor experience by providing a connection to the past.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

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Overall Preliminary Cost Estimates

The estimated cost range (in 2013 dollars) shown below includes two scenarios: 1) If the recommendations were implemented independent of other projects and include associated soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental, permitting) and 2) a cost scenario in which all the recommendations are implemented together.

The priority for each recommendation is shown as “low, medium, or high.” RPCA determined these rankings based upon three factors: 1) park user safety, 2) community prioritization feedback and the results of the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, 3) life span of existing facility.

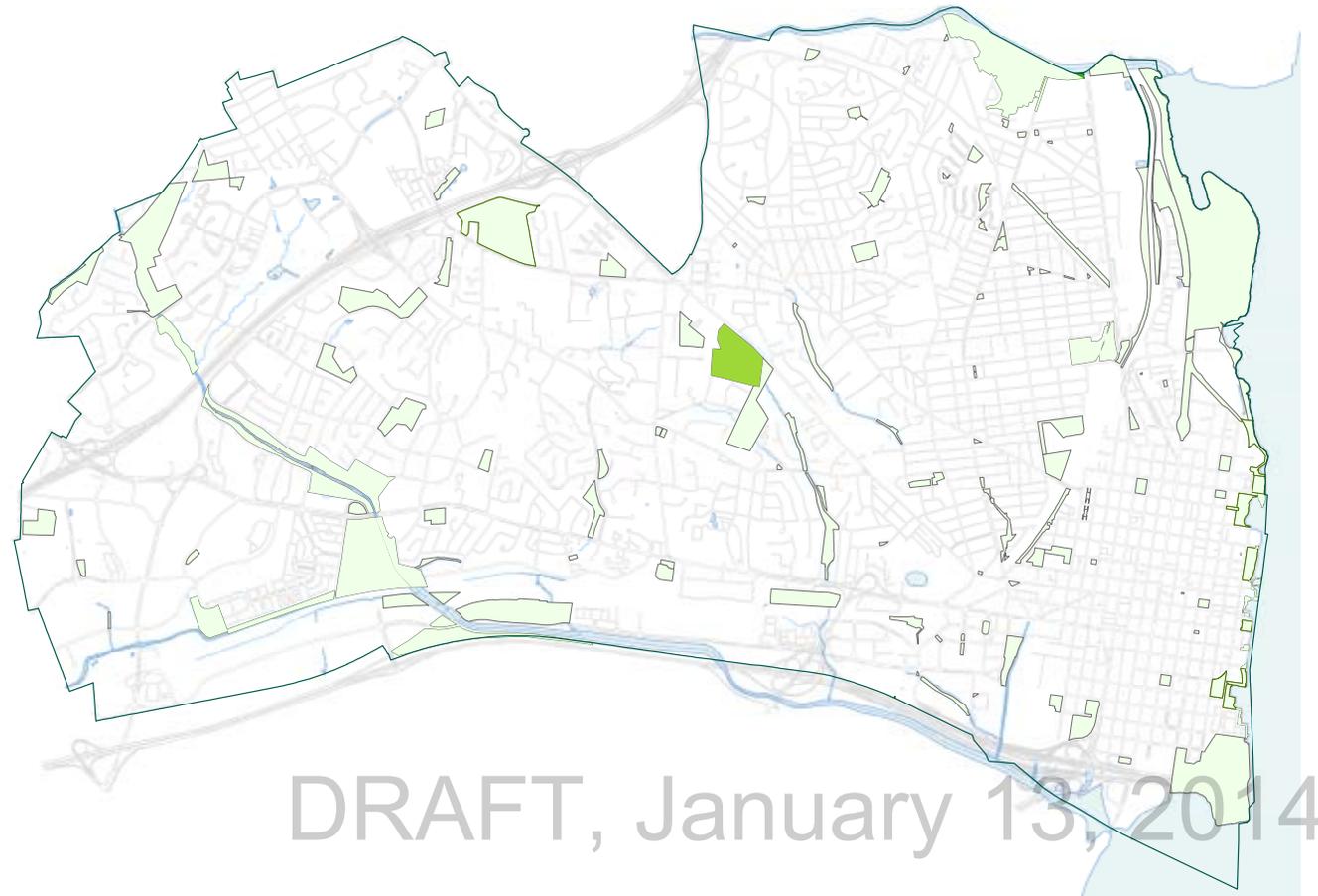
The proposed timeline for each recommendation considers the project priority, the project cost with relation to the Department budget and contingent upon the Capital Improvement Plan, and the construction sequencing of recommendation amongst other park projects.

DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST RANGES						Priority	Timeline
	If recommendations are addressed all together as package			If recommendations are addressed individually (soft costs are loaded in each item)				
WAYFINDING (Part of citywide project)	\$11,178	-	\$14,285	\$13,414	\$17,142		high	1-3 years
01 IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO HOLMES RUN TRAILS	\$15,000	-	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$21,600		medium	1-3 years
02 RESERVE SPACE FOR COMMUNITY CENTER		N/A			N/A			
03 NORTHERN PASSIVE USE AREA	\$55,273	-	\$67,574	\$77,935	\$95,279		medium	1-3 years
04 BICYCLE PARKING	\$2,000	-	\$4,000	\$2,400	\$4,800		medium	1-3 years
05 RETROFIT CAMERON STATION POND	\$3,500,000	-	\$3,500,000	\$2,500,000			high	3-10 years
06 OPEN VIEWSHEDS	\$70,000	-	\$90,000	\$100,000			high	3-10 years
07 MAINTENANCE BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS	\$359,057	-	\$480,292	\$506,271	\$677,212		medium	3-10 years
08 TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AND SHADE STRUCTURES	\$43,500	-	\$63,500	\$61,335	\$89,535		medium	3-10 years
09 STUDY FEASIBILITY OF BIKE-FRIENDLY PATH		Through T&ES			Through T&ES			
10 CONSOLIDATE FIVE SMALL PLAYGROUNDS INTO TWO		N/A			N/A			
11 PROVIDE MULTIMODAL BRIDGE ACROSS EISENHOWER AVE		Through T&ES			Through T&ES			
12 HOLD LOCATION FOR SCHOOL GARDEN		N/A			N/A			
13 DOG PARK IMPROVEMENTS	\$45,888	-	\$67,944	\$64,702	\$95,802		high	3-10 years
14 BRIDGE LIGHTING	\$7,000	-	\$10,000	\$9,870	\$14,100		high	3-10 years
15 & 16 PICNIC ACTIVITY CENTER AND PLAY FEATURES	\$148,342	-	\$207,297	\$209,162	\$292,289		medium	3-10 years
17 CLOSE GAP LEADING TO TRACKS	\$2,998	-	\$3,673	\$3,598	\$4,407		medium	3-10 years
UTILITY UPGRADES (Part of Citywide Project)	\$97,500	-	\$117,500	\$137,475	\$165,675		high	1-3 years
SUBTOTAL	\$4,272,737		\$4,650,066					
Soft Costs	CONTINGENCY	\$854,547	-	\$930,013				
	ENGINEERING	\$512,728	-	\$558,008				
	SURVEY	\$128,182	-	\$139,502				
	GEOTECHNICAL	\$85,455	-	\$93,001				
	ENVIRONMENTAL	\$170,909	-	\$186,003				
	PERMITTING	\$150,000	-	\$200,000				
GRAND TOTAL		\$6,174,560		\$6,756,593				

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CHINQUAPIN PARK



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Background

Chinquapin Park (28.27 acres), centrally located in the City and is adjacent to T.C. Williams High School and the Chinquapin Recreation Center, making it a very popular location for park users of all ages. Chinquapin is commonly regarded as one of the most familiar open spaces in the City. Before becoming a park, Chinquapin was home to several residential communities. In the early twentieth century, there was an African American community known as “Macedonia” or “Seminary” in the immediate vicinity of Chinquapin Park. Children from Macedonia attended the Seminary Colored School on the site of what is now T.C. Williams High School.

During WWII, the site became the location of Chinquapin Village, a war housing development built by the government for Torpedo Factory workers. The layout of today’s Park is still reminiscent of the historic Chinquapin neighborhoods. In fact, Chinquapin Drive, the terraced landscape and sets of concrete steps throughout the park are vestiges that point to a time when Chinquapin was an active residential neighborhood. The City acquired the property in 1961 and first proposed building a mini amusement park on the site. Later, in the summer of 1971, former Mayor Charles E. Beatley opened Chinquapin Park. The recreation center in the Park followed, opening in 1986. The Park is named for the Chinquapin Oak Tree.

When the Park opened it was an extremely popular gathering space on the weekends. Families from all over the City came to watch soccer games, see friends, and play tennis. While the Park is not as active as it once was, visitors are often seen jogging or walking around Chinquapin Drive, attending summer camp, or tending to their plots at the Chinquapin community garden. Most often, though, people visit Chinquapin because it is one of the few parks with large, open and bucolic spaces in the City. As one Park user stated, “It’s a unique little oasis and community recreation area in our urban community.” The space provides a mix of opportunities from casually enjoying the scenic beauty to playing sports.

Yet, there are many issues with the current park design that restrict efficient and safe use of the site. Most prominent is the lack of pathways connecting the park facilities. In order to walk through the park and access amenities such as the playground, basketball court, or pavilion, park users have to blaze a trail through the parking lot, scale down eroding banks, and walk along moving traffic and parked vehicles. During the public outreach for this plan, Park users stated that more than any other activity, they visit the Park to run or walk around the road (known as the loop). However, the loop does not

Neal’s local spot



Neal, a twelve year resident of Alexandria, lives two miles away from Chinquapin Park. Since retiring, he visits the Park a couple of times a week to tend his plot in the community garden. Over the summer, he has grown tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, and several herbs. In addition to gardening, Neal enjoys playing tennis and swimming at the Chinquapin Recreation Center. Neal likes the diversity of activities at Chinquapin and the convenient location to his home.



In 2012, RPCA hired the firms of Kimley-Horn and Counsilman-Hunsaker to perform an Aquatics Facilities Study identifying a set of recommendations to meet the existing and future aquatic needs in Alexandria. The study found that Chinguapin Recreation Center is well located to service the entire city as the central indoor aquatic facility. However, the aging pool is not constructed to proper competition meet dimensions and lacks sufficient space for all user groups. Therefore, City Council included the addition of a competition pool to the current Recreation Center in the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget. The existing pool will be converted to a recreation pool.

have a designated walking/running lane. The paths that do exist are not fully accessible and void of any signage for directing Chinguapin's visitors. Without any gateway or welcome signs, visitors have no means of knowing when they are entering the park, the adjacent Forest Park trail, or any of the Park's programmed spaces.

Access and circulation are also issues related to visitors driving to the Park. In addition to parking spaces around the loop, there are three parking lots associated with the Chinguapin Recreation Center. Two of the three lots are consistently full while the third, located by the tennis courts is rarely used as its location requires driving all the way around the loop to get to it. Also, each of the parking lots have a shared entrance and exit, making it difficult for cars to turnaround if the lots are full or when exiting the Park. The current parking design is inefficient and detracts from the Park user experience.

As mentioned repeatedly by park users involved in this planning process, Chinguapin's current conditions do not adequately support the desired levels of both passive and active recreation. T.C. Williams sports teams and recreational classes use the Park, but the fields closest to the school are in poor condition since their use as a construction lay down space for the T.C. Williams High School renovation in 2005. The playground, sport courts, and picnic shelter are located below a steep hill and hidden from the rest of the Park. None of these areas are fully accessible. Furthermore, the Park's open field area lacks benches, trash and recycling receptacles, high quality grass surfaces, and other amenities that make it easy for visitors to casually enjoy their time in the park.

One area of the Park facilities that stands out as having a strong and dedicated user group is Chinguapin's community garden. The garden has nearly 175 plots, each with its own aesthetic reflecting the passions and countless hours of the devoted gardeners. Come rain or shine, there are always people tending to their plots during the growing months. In addition to connecting people with their food source, the garden creates a vibrant community in the Park. However, the Park's gardening space is limited and the plots have a very infrequent turnover rate, creating a very long wait list for plots.

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Community Feedback

From September through early December 2012, RPCA solicited input on the existing conditions and possible future uses for Chinguapin Park.

To gather information, RPCA held a public workshop to discuss park needs, distributed an online survey asking for feedback, and placed hard copy surveys in boxes located at entrances to the park and in the mailboxes of adjacent neighborhood homes. Staff also visited events, local businesses, and a class at T.C. Williams High School, to hold “mobile workshops.” The survey asked park users to identify their usual point of access into the parks, the mode of transportation they use to get there, their typical park activities, what they like about the park, and what areas of the park need improvement. Survey participants also prioritized their improvement needs. See the appendix for detailed community feedback reports.

RPCA received 99 completed surveys. Of those surveyed, 26 participants lived in the 22302 zip code, 20 lived in the 22314, 17 lived in 22305, and 16 lived in 22304. Fewer than 10 participants lived in each of the other Alexandria zip codes. Two participants lived in Fairfax County. The majority of those who visit do so weekly (47%).

This is what we heard:

Seventy percent of survey participants drive to Chinguapin Park. Twenty-four percent walk to the Park and only 6% bike. This high number of vehicles implies both a need to improve the parking options and to review opportunities for encouraging safe cyclist and pedestrian access into the Park.

The access response is particularly interesting when looking at this information in combination with the question “What do you do in the Park?” The majority of participants stated that they use the park to walk, indicating that they drive to Chinguapin, park their car and then walk. Twenty-three participants stated that they run in the park. Presumably many are walking or running along the loop, shared with vehicles or on the nature trail. Other activities of significance include the community garden, playground, and the tennis courts. Fewer participants reported using the fields for athletics.

When asked, “What do you like about the Park,” participants overwhelmingly identified the Park’s open space and natural setting, reinforcing the uniqueness of a large passive use green space in the City. Chinguapin Park has a serene and pastoral character, which is clearly desired as an escape from more urban areas nearby.

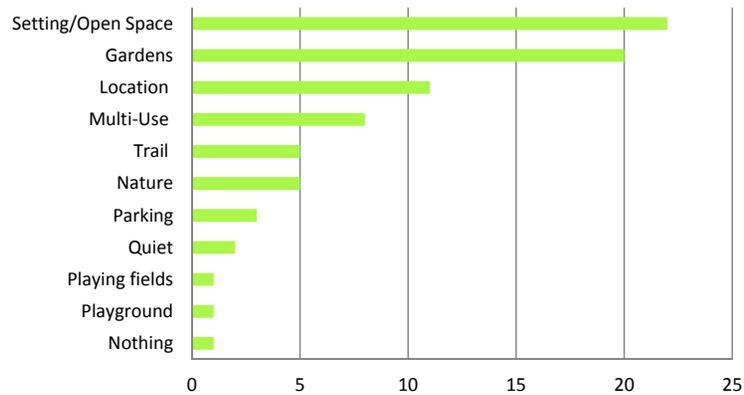
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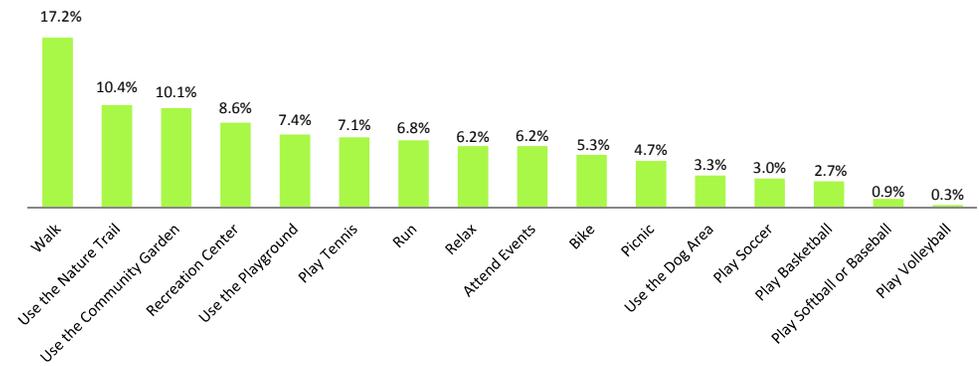
The highest priority is shown as the largest circle; the lowest priority is the smallest circle. Priorities are based on the number of responses to needed improvements and then weighted by how participants prioritized their answers

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What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



Many also replied that the gardens are extremely important to them. While it appeared that a disproportionate number of garden users may have responded to the survey compared to other Park users, their response clearly identified that the gardens bring a sense of community and culture to the City. This type of passion shown in the comments about the garden exemplifies how open space is so important in bringing residents and nature together.

There are some consistent themes throughout the various methods of community feedback. These include:

Improve mobility for pedestrians and vehicles

The survey and both workshops indicated that a parking management strategy is needed to determine how to maximize use of the parking lots and limit parking along the Loop. This may

allow the development of a car free lane for walkers and runners, better supporting one of the Park's main uses.

Preserve the pastoral green space, while accommodating multi-use sports

The survey results clearly stated that people like the Park because it is open and green. However, the T.C. students remarked that the green space is not usable for their recreational activities. Chinquapin's future design will need to be flexible enough to support multiple uses, such as sports, while still open and natural in character.

Expand or improve the community gardens

The gardens are highly active, year-round, and create a vibrant community within the Park. The land dedicated to gardening is currently limited and the plots have a very infrequent turnover rate. The City needs to improve access to gardening.

Improve the playground

As shown in the survey results, the playground is a priority for Park improvements. The workshop participants also indicated the need to renovate the picnic area, frequently used for summer camps. These two renovation projects may be combined in order to create a multi-use outdoor activity center with equipment geared towards various age groups and abilities.

Improve general maintenance

The survey and workshop results both stated the need for improved general maintenance of the Park, including better distribution of trash receptacles. Many maintenance improvements can begin prior to other projects and continue as park renovations trigger the implementation of park facility standards.

The Plan

KEYED LEGEND

1. EXPAND AND/OR RENOVATE CHINQUAPIN POOL ACCORDING TO FEASIBILITY STUDY
2. CONSOLIDATE & EXPAND REC CENTER PARKING ACCORDING TO FEASIBILITY STUDY
3. CONSTRUCT NEW PARK SHELTER
4. RELOCATE PLAYGROUND
5. RELOCATE AND ENCLOSE DOG PARK
6. CREATE ADULT FITNESS AREA AND MULTI-USE COURTS
7. CREATE GROVE OF NATIVE PLANTS RELATING TO SITE HISTORY
8. CONSTRUCT 1/4 MILE MARKED WALKING LOOP AT PERIMETER OF FIELD
9. RE-GRADE OPEN FIELD IN CENTER OF LOOP
10. MAKE WEST HALF OF LOOP PERVIOUS MATERIAL AND ONE-WAY WITH OVERFLOW PARKING LANES
11. MAKE EAST HALF OF LOOP TWO-WAY WITH TURN-AROUND AND PARKING
12. ESTABLISH ACCESSIBLE PARKING & ENTRANCE TO AQUATICS FACILITY
13. STUDY POSSIBLE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE
14. CONTINUE INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL
15. PLANT ADDITIONAL TREES
16. ADD TURN-AROUND AND RENOVATE ROAD AROUND GARDEN WITH PERVIOUS PAVING
17. COMPLETE A DOCUMENTARY STUDY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
18. DESIGN INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS

GRAPHIC KEY



DRAFT January 13, 2014

Recommendations & Implementation Strategy



The existing Chinquapin Recreation & Aquatics Facility needs to be expanded to meet the City's aquatic needs. The new building footprint will impact the park uses.



Relocating the courts, playground, fitness area, and dog park to the center would create a nexus of activity in the Park, bringing a place for the community to congregate and interact.

1

Expand and/or renovate Chinquapin Pool according to feasibility study

RPCA is currently conducting a feasibility study and determining the parameters for the new Chinquapin aquatic facilities. The new facility will be designed to service year-round citywide aquatic needs while occupying the least amount of open space possible. A new pool will most likely take the place of Chinquapin's tennis courts. Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) will be constructing six new tennis courts at T.C. Williams H.S. in 2014 that would make up for the loss. ACPS has already performed a feasibility study for these courts that considers parking, ADA accessibility, utilities, design, proper solar orientation. These new courts would meet the needs of current park users and T.C. Williams students.

ACTION: Feasibility Study currently underway

2

Consolidate & expand Recreation Center parking according to feasibility study

Any improvements to the parking lot, south east of the center, will be determined in conjunction with the Chinquapin Aquatics Feasibility Study. The parking lot will need to accommodate the expected increase in the users of the Recreation Center and the traffic during the park's peak use times. At current capacity, Chinquapin can accommodate a total of 186 cars. With expansions and improved layout, the new parking lot should accommodate nearly 80 more spaces.

ESTIMATED COST: \$400,000 - \$500,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

3

Construct new park shelter

The centrally located park shelter will provide a comfortable space for park users to congregate, picnic, or rest with a clear view of the surrounding activities in the park. It can also be used as a gathering place for summer camp participants.

ESTIMATED COST: \$500,000 - \$750,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10 years +

4

Relocate playground

The playground will be more visible from its new location between the proposed park shelter and sport courts. Children and parents using the playground will feel a heightened sense of safety with other nearby park activities. With the new location, people using the other park facilities will be able to canvass the activity at the playground while parents and guardians playing with their children can interact with other park users.

ESTIMATED COST: \$170,000 - \$250,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 years



The existing dog area is defined by four wooden bollards. It is rarely used.

5

Relocate and enclose dog park

The dog area is shown in a central location in the Park where it will not affect the protected natural resources along the edges of Chinquapin. The new design will follow the guidelines proscribed by the RPCA’s Park Facility Standards Manual and the Dog Park Master Plan. The dog area can foster a new community of park users, as is currently seen in Simpson Park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$50,000 - \$101,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

Precedent:
Edible Arbor Trail, Missouri City, Texas



In 2011, Missouri City’s Parks and Recreation Department opened the first edible arbor trail of its kind. The 2.5 mile trail already has more than 70 native fruit trees and nut plants as well as educational signage including plant information and sponsor logos. While walking the trail, visitors learn about different plants that grow well in the region and pick food from the trees on a first come first serve basis. The project was sparked by the City Forester’s dream “to create a recreational opportunity where people could hike or bike or walk their dogs along a trail and actually reach over and grab something to eat right off the trees.” Missouri City wanted the grove to be a community led project, and so far community members have taken great pride and ownership of their new park space. In fact, community partners sponsor the installation and maintenance of each tree.

6

Create adult fitness area and multi-use courts

These additions will provide park users with a greater range of non-programmed recreational opportunities. The adult fitness area will include various exercise and stretching stations for active park users while the multi-use courts will accommodate a range of different sports such as basketball, volleyball, tennis, and futsal. Having these facilities in one condensed area will encourage interaction between different user groups. The 2013 needs assessment showed a strong desire for outdoor fitness areas throughout the City’s park system.

ESTIMATED COST: \$160,000 - \$315,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

7

Create grove of native plants relating to site history

The 2011 and 2013 Park and Recreation Needs Assessment identified community gardening as an unmet need in Alexandria. This grove will supplement the existing Chinquapin community gardens and provide a valuable educational opportunity for all park users to learn about native, edible plantings. The grove fuses gardening with walking trails, another high priority need shown in the Needs Assessment. Park users will be able to walk an interactive trail weaving through native varieties of trees planted according to the grid pattern of the 1940’s Chinquapin War Village. Along the way, visitors will learn about the grove’s different species from informational signs on the trail. The grove concept is dependent upon community partnerships for installation and maintenance. In the meantime, the space can be an open landscape. The trees can be planted over time as sponsors dedicate them.

ESTIMATED COST: \$215,000 - \$392,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

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Joggers and pedestrians use the Loop to run, yet there is no sidewalk or dedicated recreational lane.

8

Construct ¼ mile-marked walking loop at perimeter of field

Many survey respondents and workshop participants expressed a strong desire for a continuous pedestrian walking loop circling the bucolic open space at Chinquapin. Currently, park visitors walk or jog in the loop with moving traffic around them. The proposed walking loop also addresses the 2013 Needs Assessment desire for more spaces to walk, particularly in the West End and Seminary Valley. The walking loop will contribute to the synergy of park uses located at the center of the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$320,000 - \$795,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The fields inside the Loop are in such poor condition that the Alexandria Soccer Association will no longer use them. There are many divets and rough spots, making it unsafe to play on.

9

Re-grade open field in center of loop

The open space inside of the loop will be re-graded so that it is better suited for sports games and T.C. Williams' recreational uses. One large multi-purpose irrigated field can accommodate many uses, including P.E. class, soccer class and camps, and open passive play. If used, artificial turf would allow significantly less maintenance and all-weather play. The area would remain unfenced to maintain the open, pastoral character of the Park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$535,000 - \$960,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



By re-constructing the east half of the Loop as a two-way road, the western portion can be transformed to open space. Using a grass-pave systems, as shown above, the area can be a pervious surface and also used for parking during special events.

10

Make west half of loop pervious material and one-way with overflow parking lanes

The west section of Chinquapin Drive running along the passive space and grove will be converted to grass pave in order to increase the amount of usable open space in the park. Cars will be able to park on the grass-paved section when the park is heavily programmed. Otherwise, the section will be blocked off by bollards on either end. Park users will easily move in and out of the park and access parking spaces using the rest of Chinquapin Drive, which will become a two-way road with a turn-around at the end. The proposed parking lot adjacent to the Chinquapin Recreation Center and Aquatics Facility can accommodate the vehicles that currently park on the loop.

ESTIMATED COST: \$582,000 - \$970,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



11

Make east half of loop two-way with turn-around and parking

The east section of Chinquapin Drive adjacent to the parking lot will be converted to a two-way road to concentrate traffic only in one area of the park. Cars will be able to parallel park on one side of the road. The turn-around will allow traffic to flow through without three-point turns or clogging the parking lot area. During peak time (school hours), around 185 cars are parked in the Park (including the inner and outer loop and parking lots). The proposed design accommodates 262 spaces during peak hours (of which, 75 are only available during school hours or events).

ESTIMATED COST: \$944,000 - \$1,500,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



12

Establish accessible parking and entrance to aquatics facility

Accessible parking will be located at the entrance to the newly renovated and expanded Chinquapin Recreation Center. All of the Recreation Center's entrances will be accessible so that all park users can access the Center from different parts of the park.

ACTION: Include as part of the Chinquapin Aquatics Facility Study.

Cars currently park around the Loop with its highest use during school hours. Yet, the parking lot by the tennis courts is almost always empty. Since traffic moves in one direction, drivers park in the first space they see before driving around the loop to get to the empty parking lot.

13

Study possible stormwater management infrastructure

The City is evaluating the feasibility of a stormwater management facility near the outfall that daylight into Taylor Run, located in the area in front of the existing recreation center. An existing stormwater pipe runs beneath this area, providing a great opportunity to treat a significant volume of previously untreated stormwater. Any stormwater management facility at this location would not only be designed for functionality, but the design would also aim to create a park amenity. The stormwater facility may also be combined with a stream restoration project downstream of the existing outfall. Since the area is between a high school, a recreation center and a park, the site would provide a great educational opportunity for students, children, and residents. Educational signage can help explain the stormwater benefits of the stormwater facility.

ACTION: T&ES to complete engineering feasibility



Invasive species, such as English Ivy, shown above, have grown throughout the Park. Volunteers often help remove them to allow restoration of the natural and native species.

14

Continue invasive species removal

RPCA will continue its work of removing invasive plants that disturb the Park's natural habitat and choke out its endemic species.

ESTIMATED COST: \$35,000 - \$50,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: On-going

DRAFT, January 13, 2014



The existing volleyball court, above, is under used. The 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment ranked volleyball as the second lowest facility need in the City.



The road behind the community garden is in poor condition. It also has a dead end which causes drivers to conduct a three point turn, often damaging the adjacent wooded area.



Stairs along the Park's slopes are reminiscent of the past site of Chinquapin Village.

15

Plant additional trees

More trees of appropriate native species will be planted throughout the site, including the current and unused volleyball court area, in order to provide shade for park users and reforest areas of the park near natural areas. This recommendation is consistent with the City of Alexandria Urban Forestry Master Plan (2009).

ESTIMATED COST: \$16,000 - \$33,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

16

Add turn-around and renovate road around community garden with pervious paving

The new turn-around will make it easier for community gardeners to drive materials to and from their plots. It also has added benefits to the garden. The pervious surface of the turn-around will be designed to filter stormwater running off the garden.

ESTIMATED COST: \$778,000 - \$1,300,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

17

Complete a Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation and implement to resultant Resource Management Plan

The completion of a Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation will allow for an understanding of the history of the site and the location of the significant resources for current and future planning and management decisions. Additional excavations to implement the Resource Management Plan will ensure that information about the past is not lost as a result of development and enable the design and construction of interpretive elements that evoke the unique nature of Chinquapin Village.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: Before preparation of the Preliminary Site Plan

18

Design interpretive elements to highlight the Park's history

Placement of interpretive elements will educate visitors about the area's history and enrich the Park user experience by providing a connection to the past.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: During design phase

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Overall Preliminary Cost Estimates

The estimated cost range (in 2013 dollars) shown below includes two scenarios: 1) If the recommendations were implemented independent of other projects and include associated soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental, permitting) and 2) a cost scenario in which all the recommendations are implemented together.

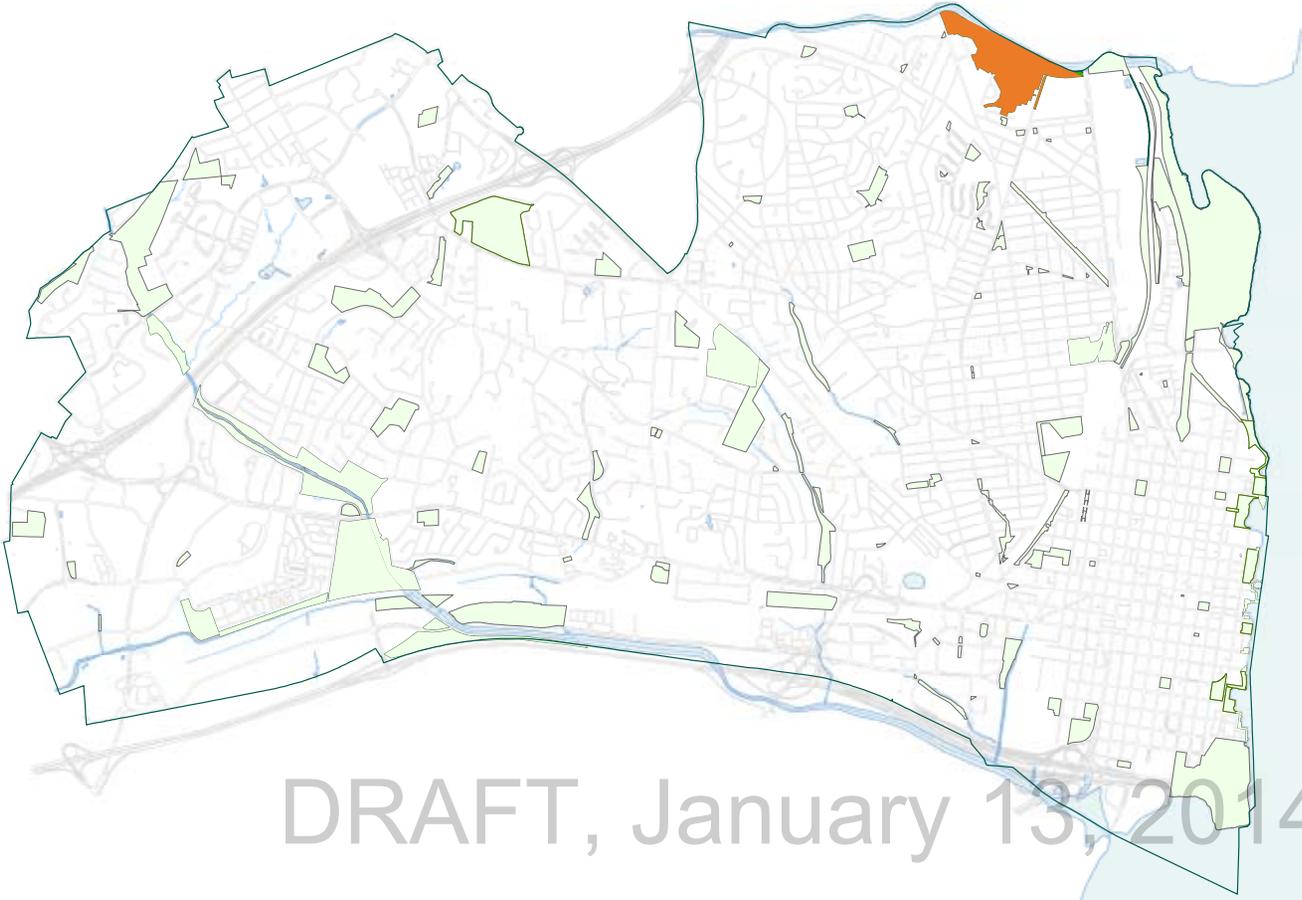
The priority for each recommendation is shown as “low, medium, or high.” RPCA determined these rankings based upon three factors: 1) park user safety, 2) community prioritization feedback and the results of the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, 3) life span of existing facility.

The proposed timeline for each recommendation considers the project priority, the project cost with relation to the Department budget and contingent upon the Capital Improvement Plan, and the construction sequencing of recommendation amongst other park projects.

ESTIMATED COST RANGES										
DESCRIPTION			If recommendations are addressed all together as package			If recommendations are addressed individually (soft costs are loaded in each item)			Priority	Timeline
WAYFINDING			\$11,178	-	\$14,285	\$13,414	-	\$17,142	high	1-3 years
01 CONDUCT AQUATICS FEASIBILITY STUDY			ALREADY UNDERWAY			-	-	-	-	-
02 CONSOLIDATE & EXPAND REC CENTER PARKING			390,486	-	507,576	\$550,585	-	\$705,530	high	3-10 years
03 NEW PARK SHELTER			420,390	-	537,804	\$592,750	-	\$747,548	medium	10+ years
04 RELOCATE PLAYGROUND			122,388	-	179,311	\$172,567	-	\$249,243	high	1-3 years
05 RELOCATE & ENCLOSE DOG PARK			50,891	-	72,892	\$71,757	-	\$101,320	medium	3-10 years
06 ADULT FITNESS AND MULTI-USE COURTS			159,248	-	227,575	\$224,540	-	\$316,329	medium	3-10 years
07 NATIVE PLANT GROVE			215,124	-	282,333	\$303,325	-	\$392,443	medium	3-10 years
08 1/4 MILE WALKING LOOP AT FIELD PERIMETER			320,326	-	572,232	\$451,659	-	\$795,402	high	3-10 years
09 RE-GRADE FIELD IN CENTER OF LOOP			536,356	-	690,850	\$756,262	-	\$960,282	high	3-10 years
10 WEST LOOP ROAD			582,522	-	698,301	\$821,357	-	\$970,638	medium	3-10 years
11 EAST LOOP ROAD			944,134	-	1,142,177	\$1,331,229	-	\$1,587,627	medium	3-10 years
12 PARKING AND ENTRANCE TO AQUATICS FACILITY			60,280	-	68,592	\$84,995	-	\$95,343	high	3-10 years
13 SWM INFRASTRUCTURE						TBD				
14 INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL			34,500	-	34,500	\$41,400	-	\$47,955	High	1-3 years
15 REFORESTATION			16,021	-	23,748	\$19,226	-	\$33,010	High	1-3 years
16 COMMUNITY GARDEN ROAD & TURN AROUND			778,630	-	959,149	\$1,097,869	-	\$1,333,217	medium	3-10 years
UTILITY UPGRADES			110,000	-	137,500	\$155,100	-	\$191,125	high	1-3 years
SUBTOTAL			\$4,752,475	-	\$6,148,827					
Soft Costs			CONTINGENCY	950,495.07	-	1,229,765.39				
			ENGINEERING	570,297.04	-	737,859.23				
			SURVEY	142,574.26	-	184,464.81				
			GEOTECHNICAL	95,049.51	-	122,976.54				
			ENVIRONMENTAL	190,099.01	-	245,953.08				
			PERMITTING	150,000.00	-	200,000.00				
GRAND TOTAL			\$6,850,990	-	\$8,869,846					

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FOUR MILE RUN PARK



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Background

Four Mile Run Park (51.56 acres) has all the major components of an urban oasis: ballfields, soccer fields, multi-purpose courts, public plaza, and, its swamp forest and self-sustaining freshwater tidal marsh. The Park is located in a very diverse and active community in Alexandria's Arlandria neighborhood. Local residents play lively soccer matches on the multi-purpose courts while bird watchers quietly observe the diverse habitat. The heavily used bike trail connects to regional destinations and, therefore, cyclists and other visitors travel through the Park. Yet, the Park does not have the facilities or landscape to support and sustain its desired uses and upkeep.

Both natural and man made interventions have led to the Park's current conditions. Native Americans once inhabited the Park and later, during the Civil War, the Southwest portion of the park was used as campground for the 1st and 2nd Ohio militias and the 1st and 3rd New Jersey Militias. Tax records indicate the possible presence of a cemetery in the northwest section of the Park. By the early 20th century urban development began to surround the park, spurred by the transportation opportunities along the stream and the nearby railway. By the mid-20th century, there were several instances where Four Mile Run Stream flooded the Park and its surrounding neighborhoods. As a result, the Army Corps of Engineers channelized the stream, addressing the flooding issues, but creating hard, inaccessible boundaries between the water and land and reducing the ecological resources in the stream and along the banks.

Since then, the tidal marsh has been impassible, especially at high tide, and the outgrowths of invasive plants threaten the Park's natural resources and deny visitors opportunities for environmental education. This valuable natural resource has been neglected, leading to difficulty in managing both illegal activity and prolific invasive flora and fauna. In 2006, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria adopted the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan with the support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The plan provides the framework for the restoration of 2.3 miles of highly degraded stream within the hardened flood control channel, including the section of the Stream that borders the Park from Mt. Vernon Avenue to U.S. Route One. The Four Mile Run Tidal Restoration Demonstration Project is currently (2013) in the design phase. The project aims to restore the banks of the Four Mile Run shoreline and wetlands along Four Mile Run from Mt. Vernon Avenue to Route One. The scope of work includes naturalization of the corridor, such as removal and management of invasive species and re-introduction of herbaceous plantings, a sediment transition/capture area to minimize the amount of sediment that flows into the tidal section of Four Mile Run, and re-establishment of wetlands in Four Mile Run Park. The City of Alexandria and Arlington County

Ernesto's Four Mile



Ernesto Martinez has been a resident of the Arlandria neighborhood in Alexandria, for eight years. He loves walking the trails and playing soccer at Four Mile Run Park, where he walks to and from his home at the Arlandria Chirilagua Housing Cooperative south of the Park. Ernesto hopes that with future improvements, Four Mile Run will become an even better place for playing recreational soccer, spending time with friends, or simply enjoying the area's natural beauty.

anticipate the construction to begin September 2014 and conclude September 2015.

Along the edge of the forested area is one of the Park's dominant features, its pedestrian and bicyclist trail. This trail is a local and regional route. However, due to its lack of clear signage and bike racks, the trail functions as a connection through the park and not a path welcoming people to stay and enjoy the many features within it. Moreover, the trail system through the park is not connected with other activity centers, such as the Cora Kelly Recreation Center. The path through the Park's natural area is not marked and does not connect through the wetlands, making the Park's natural resources difficult to explore.

Within the Park, Four Mile has facilities for visitors to engage in a number of sporting activities including basketball courts (mainly used for futsal) and baseball, softball, and soccer fields. Sporting teams, including the collegiate baseball team, the Alexandria Aces, place a high demand on most of these facilities, especially the soccer field and Frank Mann Baseball Field, each of which are in need of re-grading and drainage improvements. While, the majority of park users bike or walk to the Park, it is a destination for sports field users who drive and carry athletic equipment to use the fields. The current parking lots are insufficient in capacity, despite efforts to encourage multi-modal methods of transportation, such as buses and carpooling.

While the sports facilities are heavily used, the passive areas and landscape are largely neglected. The off-leash and unfenced dog area is only occasionally used for dogs, and is more often a space to play soccer. Four Mile also lacks park furniture to accommodate spectators watching the sports games or for park users. For example, there is only one picnic table in the Park. Moreover, the playground is outdated and under used. As parents and neighbors partaking in this planning process pointed out, many people consider the playground unsafe in its current location because trees hide it from view and it is isolated from other park activities.

The Cora Kelly School and Recreation Center are located along the southeast corner of the Park. The Center is a hub of community activity, including after school programs, fitness classes and events. Its situation within a residential

neighborhood and the edge of a park full of sports fields and nature education opportunities seems ideal. Yet, the entrance to the building is on Commonwealth Avenue, away from the Park and there is no pathway or connection from the building to the Park. Recreation leaders bring classes along Commonwealth Avenue and through a parking lot, despite there being wetlands and open space to see just behind the Center.

On the west/northwest end of the Park, the Conservatory building at 4109 Mount Vernon Avenue is drawing more activity to the area. The City acquired the open space properties at 4109-4125 Mount Vernon Avenue, including the former Duron Paint store building, in January 2007 through the City's Open Space Program. In June 2010, the City Council approved a Special Use Permit to convert the old paint store into a community building for public use, as guided by the Four Mile Run Restoration Plan. City Council dedicated the building during its grand opening ceremony held on May 15, 2012. As of now (Fall 2013), the building does not have a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system and is predominantly used for seasonal activities such as the increasingly popular Four Mile Run Farmers' and Artisans' Market and community festivals. Playgroups and other community groups also regularly rent the building. The plaza area includes rain gardens with trees and shrubs, reducing the pollutants discharging into Four Mile Run. This area of the Park has proven to be a successful hub of renewed community involvement and activity, exemplifying the potential for other park improvements.



Flooding from Four Mile Run prior to channelization of the stream.



Four Mile Run Streambank today.



Community Feedback

From September through early December 2012, RPCA solicited input on the existing conditions and possible future uses for Four Mile Run Park.

To gather information, RPCA held a public workshop to discuss park needs, distributed an online survey asking for feedback, and placed hard copy surveys in boxes located at entrances to the park, Cora Kelly Recreation Center and in the mailboxes of adjacent neighborhood homes. Staff also visited events, local businesses, and a Playgroup in the Conservatory to hold “mobile workshops.” The survey asked park users to identify their usual point of access into the parks, the mode of transportation they use to get there, their typical park activities, what they like about the park, and what areas of the park need improvement. Survey participants also prioritized their improvement needs. See the appendix for detailed community feedback reports

RPCA received 91 completed surveys. Of those surveyed, 32 participants lived in the 22301 zip code and 28 lived in the adjacent zip code, 22305. Fewer than 10 participants lived in the lived in each of the other Alexandria zip codes and none lived in 22206. Seven participants lived in Arlington. The majority of those who visit do so weekly (42.9%).

This is what we heard:

There is not a dominant mode of transportation to Four Mile Run Park. Park Users almost equally walk (30.8%) as much as drive (29.7%), while 39.6% bike.

When looking at this information in combination with the question “What do you do in the Park,” it is apparent that survey participants are using the Park’s trails (30% use the park for biking and 14% for walking), implying that the trail through the Park is one of the major Park resources. Other activities of significance include the visits to the Farmer’s Market and general relaxation.

When asked, “What do you like about the Park,” participants overwhelmingly identified the trail, reinforcing the Parks importance as a route for walkers and cyclists. Other replies, including “nature,” “location,” “openness and green space” recognize the Park’s natural setting along the Four Mile Run Stream, a scarce resource in an urban setting.

There are some consistent themes throughout the three methods of community feedback. These include:

Nature

The survey and workshop clearly indicated the Park’s highest asset and priority for improvement are the Park’s natural areas. The Park’s features, such as the wetlands and stream, are rare in an urban environment and create bird habitats and unique

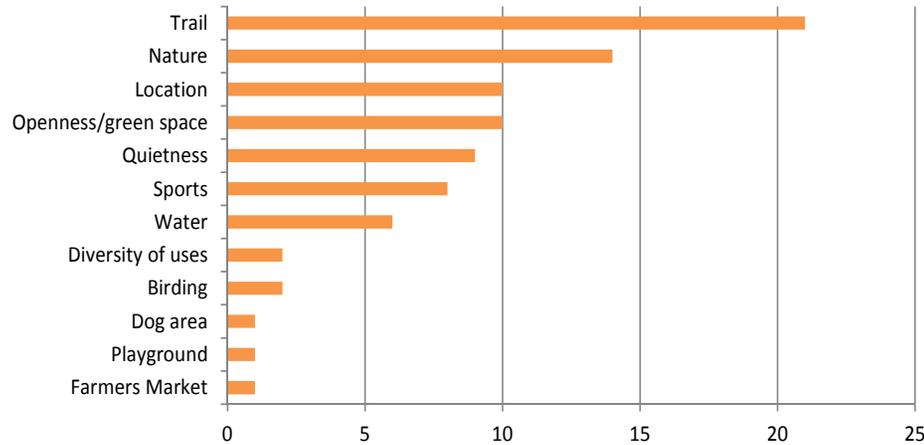
What needs improvement in Four Mile Run Park?



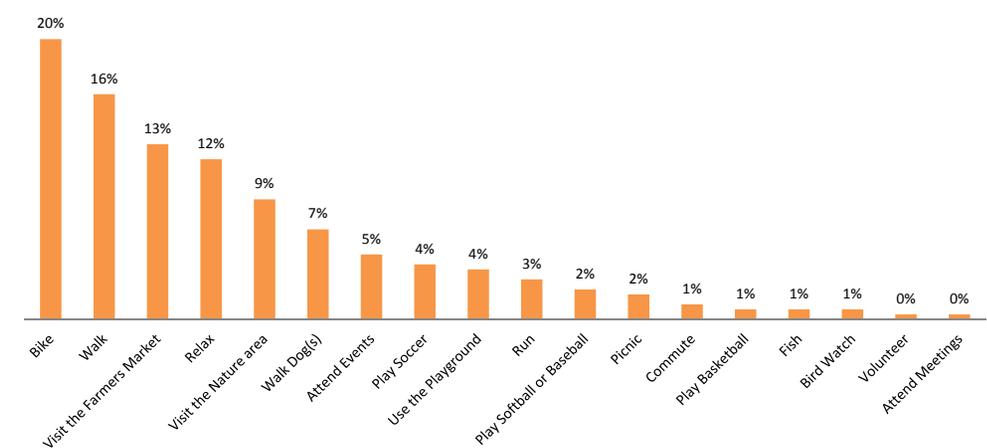
The highest priority is shown as the largest circle; the lowest priority is the smallest circle. Priorities are based on the number of responses to needed improvements and then weighted by how participants prioritized their answers

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What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



ecological resources. Yet, the Park's current design and the growth of invasive species have masked these resources and opportunities for environmental education.

Trails and Connections

One of the dominant uses of the Park is its pedestrian and bicyclist trail. As indicated in the survey and the workshop, the trail is a local and regional destination. However, the trail mainly serves as a connection through the park, rather than attracting people to stay in the Park. Trail amenities, such as bike racks and park activities, would allow people to not only pass through, but to visit. Additionally, more trails through the wetlands and to the Cora Kelly Recreation Center would allow greater park usage and connections to nature.

Security and Park Activities

The playgroup's major concern with using the Park is

its security. This was also emphasized in the workshop and survey. Park activities, such as the playground, do not appear to be fully used because they are hidden from the street and isolated. As suggested in the workshop, one solution to enhance the Park's activities is to cluster uses near the park entrances. This would create a convergence for mixed age groups and programs, allowing more "eyes on the park" and the perception of active, safe spaces.

Parking

The majority of Park visitors bike or walk to the Park. However, there are many users that drive, particularly to use the athletic fields. It is likely that most sports players will continue to drive as they originate from all over the City to use the fields and often carrying athletic equipment. Appropriate parking accommodations must be met for sports field use, but while doing so natural areas will need to be preserved.

Natural play spaces

The workshop participants indicated an interest in seeing more areas in the park for kids to play on informal park elements, such as boulders and climbing features. The survey also supports the need for a renovated playground with park furniture, while the playgroup hoped to see play features in more visible locations. All three of these interests may be incorporated near park entrances and other locations.

The Plan

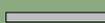
KEYED LEGEND

1. RENOVATE PARKING LOTS & ADD BIKE PARKING
2. COMPLETE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY BUILDING AND PARK EXPANSION
3. ADD WATER FOUNTAIN
4. ADD MOTION SENSOR AREA LIGHTING PER APD
5. IMPROVE FIELD CONDITIONS
6. RELOCATE & FENCE DOG AREA
7. ADD 2-3 ADULT FITNESS STATIONS ALONG PATH
8. RELOCATE & CLUSTER PLAYGROUND, COURTS AND SEATING
9. ADD MILE MARKERS ALONG EXISTING PATH
10. ADD NEW HARD & SOFT TRAILS
11. IMPROVE PERIMETER TREES TO CREATE "GREEN ALLEYS"
12. INSTALL NEW BRIDGES
13. CONSTRUCT STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ELEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL FEATURES
14. ESTABLISH NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN
15. CREATE OPEN-USE FIELD WITH SEATING
16. AMEND TURNABOUT & REESTABLISH GREEN SPACE WITH PICNIC AREA AND GRILLS
17. RESERVE AREA FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE RECYCLING CENTER
18. RENOVATE MUSTER ROOM AND ADD RESTROOMS
19. INCREASE CONNECTIVITY TO CORA KELLY FACILITIES
20. PEDESTRIANIZE INTERSECTION & CONNECT TO 3550 COMMONWEALTH AVE PARK
21. FORMALIZE PARK ENTRANCE
22. COMPLETE A DOCUMENTARY STUDY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
23. DESIGN AND INSTALL INTERPRETIVE MARKERS TO HIGHLIGHT THE HISTORY OF FOUR MILE RUN PARK

PER FMR RESTORATION PLAN

- A. NATURALIZE STREAMBANK
- B. REMOVE FILL & RESTORE WETLAND
- C. INSTALL NEW BRIDGE

GRAPHIC KEY:

	HARD TRAILS		PARK BOUNDS		ENTRANCE PLAZAS		ATHLETIC FIELDS		STREAM BANK RESTORATION		TIDAL WETLANDS
	SOFT TRAILS/ BOARDWALK										



Recommendations & Implementation Strategy



Drivers park haphazardly in the parking lot west of the soccer fields.



In 2007 the City acquired the properties at 4109-4125 Mt. Vernon Ave. A group of local architects donated their time to develop the plan for the site, shown above. In 2011 the City completed the first phase of work, including the building shell renovation, event space, and stage.

1

Renovate parking lots & add bike parking*

The parking lots will be able to accommodate more vehicles for sports field users once they are renovated and restriped. The renovated parking lots will reduce run-off by including porous pavement which is particularly important in such a highly sensitive environment. Additionally, installing bike racks will encourage park users to bike to Four Mile.

ESTIMATED COST: \$690,000 - \$832,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

2

Complete implementation of the Four Mile Run Park Conservatory & park expansion

The parkland along Mount Vernon Avenue will continue its transformation into a thriving community space. As previously planned, the Community Building needs a new HVAC system and roof repairs, connecting trail, natural play features, park furnishings and rain gardens added to the surrounding plaza area.

ESTIMATED COST: \$400,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

3

Add drinking fountains

A drinking fountain in this area will serve those using the Conservatory as well as general park visitors.

ESTIMATED COST: \$5,000 - \$10,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

4

Add motion sensor area lighting per Alexandria Police Department recommendations

Energy Efficient lighting in this area will increase feeling of safety for commuters in the evening, and work in accordance with the security and visibility needs of the Police department.

ESTIMATED COST: \$9,800 - \$14,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3 - 10 Years

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*In addition to bike parking at Four Mile Run Park, a new bike share station will be installed near the Park in conjunction with the upcoming Mount Vernon Village Center. Bike share will help create linkages between Four Mile Run Park and other area parks, making it easier for people to access Four Mile from different parts of the City.



The Four Mile fields are amongst the best in the City, but need improved drainage systems. Field #2 faces the wrong orientation for meeting standards.



The boundary of the existing dog area is defined by wooded bollards.



The 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment results showed a high need for fitness equipment, such as the chin up bars recently installed in Holmes Run, above.



The current playground is secluded in the Park.

5

Improve field conditions

Frank Mann Field needs a new backstop, press box and foul ball fencing. Improvements to both Field #2 and #3's makeover will include a new backstop, soccer goals, benches, and irrigation. These investments will allow RPCA to maximize use of sports facilities at Four Mile Run while maintaining high quality standards over time. This plan recommends re-orienting the softball field to an optimal field alignment for sun and shade.

ESTIMATED COST: \$1,252,585 - \$1,601,020 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

6

Relocate and fence dog area

People bring their dogs to the current dog area throughout the day even though it is unfenced and relatively small compared to others in the City. Moving the dog area and creating a boundary around it will help create an active hub in the center of the park. The new dog park will meet the City's fenced dog area standards.

ESTIMATED COST: \$65,000 - \$90,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

7

Add 2-3 adult fitness stations along path

Many people walk, jog, or run through the Park as part of their exercise route. The new adult fitness stations would provide exercise opportunity for park users and give active passersbys a reason to spend more time in the Park. The 2013 Needs Assessment showed a strong desire for fitness stations.

ESTIMATED COST: \$10,000 - \$18,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

8

Relocate and cluster playground, courts, and seating

Clustering the playground, courts, and seating will open up more contiguous open space in the center of the park and encourage interactions between people in different age and user groups. The activities will also be more visible from the proposed Mount Vernon Village Center, creating a safer activity space.

ESTIMATED COST: \$170,000 - \$210,000* PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

*The costs shown are only for the playground. The Mount Vernon Village Center will contribute funds for the sports courts.

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Example of mile marker in Holmes Run Park.

9

Add wayfinding and mile markers along existing path

Many pedestrians, joggers, and runners use the path through the Park. Enhanced directional signage and mile markers will make the path a more enjoyable and safer route for people to take.

ESTIMATED COST: \$5,000 - \$10,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 years



Informal "desire lines" indicate where park users want pathways.

10

Add new hard and soft trails

The informal desire paths at Four Mile demonstrate the need for a cohesive system of pathways throughout the Park. The paths have evolved over time as external and internal uses have changed. The lack of convenient paths linking different park facilities has caused park users to blaze their own. New hard and soft trails on the northern half of the Park will create additional routes for pedestrians to walk and increase access to park facilities.

ESTIMATED COST: \$450,000 - \$720,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The southside of the Park abuts the alley of a residential neighborhood.

11

Improve perimeter trees to create "Green Alleys"

"Green Alleys" will serve as a natural buffer between the Park and the adjacent neighborhood. They will create a comfortable sense of enclosure for people in the Park with sufficient openings for neighbors and park visitors to see in and out of the Park. The new trees will also contribute to the City's tree canopy. New trees would contribute to the goals of the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

ESTIMATED COST: \$61,000 - \$75,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



Currently, there is no pedestrian connection over the tidal marsh.

12

Install new bridges

With new bridges installed, park users can take continuous routes throughout the Park. The bridges would be built to allow park users to cross natural habitat with minimal disturbance.

ESTIMATED COST: \$535,000 - \$1,270,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

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Integrated stormwater management in Portland, OR.

13

Construct stormwater management element with educational features

The City is studying the feasibility of a stormwater treatment forebay at the existing outfall near the trail to help reduce the amount of trash, sediment and pollutants (phosphorous and nitrogen) discharging to the existing wetland. Since the area is adjacent to a park trail, the facility may be accompanied by educational signage explaining the stormwater benefits of the facility and the existing wetland area.

ACTION: T&ES to complete engineering feasibility



Co-op garden at George Washington Middle School.

14

Establish new community garden

A new community garden will help address the City's need for gardening opportunities in the Arlandria community, as demonstrated in the 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. The garden will be a collaborative effort between the Park's neighboring residents and institutions, and will create a great space for bridging new relationships in the community. The garden will present an opportunity for children at the Cora Kelly School and Recreation Center to discover gardening and components of a healthy lifestyle.

ESTIMATED COST: \$105,000 - \$131,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



Open play currently occurs in the dog area, as shown above.

15

Create open-use field with seating

The open play field will be a designated space within the park for people to engage in non-programmed active uses like pick-up soccer, touch football, or ultimate frisbee. The field will be graded at a modified elevation and lined with built-in terraced seating where people can congregate to watch others play.

ESTIMATED COST: \$58,000 - \$80,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The Commonwealth Ave. Park entrance lacks a welcoming entrance and the part of the street north of the entrance is currently unused.

16

Amend turnabout and reestablish green space with picnic furniture

In accordance with the goals of the City's Open Space Plan, the Plan proposes to move the Commonwealth Avenue turnabout to the entrance at the parking lot and convert the .25 acres of this under used stretch of Commonwealth Avenue along the edge of Field # 2 to a working open space. This space will have picnic tables to accommodate park gatherings and spectators from the games happening at Frank Mann Field and Field #2. The new turnabout would serve as a formal entrance to the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$158,000 - \$190,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The City has a standard recycling drop-off center, as shown above in Jones Point Park.

17

Reserve area for possible future recycling center

As part of a recycling plan for the City, Transportation & Environmental Services may use this location as a drop-off center for recycling with a collection box.

ESTIMATED COST: \$45,000 - \$50,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The existing park staff room is an insufficient size and located between two restrooms.

18

Renovate muster room and add restrooms

Park staff is in great need of additional space to store equipment and adequate restrooms in order to best perform their task of maintaining Four Mile Run Park to the highest quality possible.

ESTIMATED COST: \$200,000 - \$400,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

19

Increase connectivity to Cora Kelly facilities

The link to Cora Kelly Facilities is extremely important given that Four Mile offers an incredible space for children of all ages to play and learn. With a better connection to the Park, Cora Kelly will facilitate programs and events in Four Mile. It also will allow children more access to the abundant natural resources in the Park, including wetlands, and provide environmental education opportunities.

ESTIMATED COST: \$320,000 - \$525,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The southwest corner of the park, the back of Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and 3550 Commonwealth Park are currently disconnected and lack formal entrances.

20

Pedestrianize intersection and connect to 3550 Commonwealth Park

The new pedestrian route connecting to 3550 Commonwealth Park is a practical means of creating an interconnected system of Parks and open spaces in Arlandria.

ACTION: Underway through T&ES

21

Formalize park entrance

Currently, there is a lack of signage and prominent entrances publicizing the park and its many features. This new entrance plaza will welcome neighbors and Dale Street passersby to the Park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$24,000 - \$36,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

22

Complete a Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation

The completion of the Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation will allow for an understanding of the history of the site and the locations of significant resources (including a possible cemetery, Civil War encampment and evidence of 18th and 19th-century residences) for current and future planning and management decisions.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

23

Design and install interpretive markers to highlight the history of Four Mile Run Park

Placement of interpretive markers will educate residents about the area's history and enrich the visitor experience by providing a connection to the past.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



During the Four Mile Run flood control project of the 1970's, the Four Mile Run streambank and wetlands were inundated with construction fill and, subsequently, invasive species. The Four Mile Run Restoration Project aims to restore these sites as natural habitats for plants and wildlife within an urban setting.



In 2010, Arlington and Alexandria held a design competition for a pedestrian-cyclist bridge connecting the two jurisdictions. A design team lead by Buro Happold won the award and is now completing design sets for the bridge concept shown above.

A

Naturalize Streambank Corridor

In order to naturalize the streambank, the City and Arlington County will remove the riprap, gabions, and invasive species along both sides of the streambank. Herbaceous plantings of appropriate native species, including low growing, low maintenance hearty naturalizing species will improve the habitat, increase stability and improve water quality throughout the corridor.

IMPLEMENTATION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY. DESIGN COMPLETION: Spring 2014
CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION: Fall 2015

B

Remove Fill and Restore Wetland

This project will remove, lower and terrace the riverside portion of Four Mile Run Park to establish and restore the historic wetlands prior to construction of the flood control project. This will create new emergent tidal wetlands with wetland plantings. The grading will remove the artificial fill and be designed flat to allow for a future boardwalk and trail.

IMPLEMENTATION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY. DESIGN COMPLETION: Spring 2014
CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION: Fall 2015

C

Install Pedestrian Cyclist Bridge

The project consists of a new pedestrian and cycling bridge to be built over the existing Four Mile Run flood control channel between the borders of Alexandria and Arlington Counties in Virginia. The design ideas for the bridge were first explored via a competition process organized by Arlington and Alexandria in 2010 and is currently in design. The bridge will connect existing bike paths near South Eads Street and Commonwealth Avenue. It is approximately 375 feet from one side of the channel to the other in this location.

DESIGN IS ALREADY UNDERWAY, FUNDED BY VDOT AND LOCAL MATCH.
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST: \$7,000,000 - \$9,000,000
PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

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Overall Preliminary Cost Estimates

The estimated cost range (in 2013 dollars) shown on the right includes two scenarios: 1) If the recommendations were implemented independent of other projects and include associated soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental, permitting) and 2) a cost scenario in which all the recommendations are implemented together.

The priority for each recommendation is shown as "low, medium, or high." RPCA determined these rankings based upon three factors: 1) park user safety, 2) community prioritization feedback and the results of the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, 3) life span of existing facility.

The proposed timeline for each recommendation considers the project priority, the project cost with relation to the Department budget and contingent upon the Capital Improvement Plan, and the construction sequencing of recommendation amongst other park projects.

Projects included as part of the Four Mile Run Restoration Project are already funded through local and federal State and Tribal Assistance Grant programs.

		ESTIMATED COST RANGES						
DESCRIPTION		If recommendations are addressed all together as package		If recommendations are addressed individually (soft costs are loaded in each item)		Priority	Proposed Timeline	
WAYFINDING		\$11,178	-	\$14,285	\$13,144	-	\$17,142;high	1-3 years
01 MT VERNON AVE PARKING LOT		127,115	-	163,388	\$179,232	-	\$223,842;high	3-10 years
01 COMMONWEALTH PARKING LOT		361,964	-	443,910	\$510,369	-	\$608,156;medium	1-3 years
02 COMMUNITY BUILDING RENOVATION		400,000	-	400,000	\$400,000	-	\$400,000;high	3-10 years
03 ADD WATER FOUNTAINS		5,000	-	10,000	\$5,000	-	\$10,000;medium	1-3 years
04 ADD MOTION SENSOR LIGHTING		\$2,700	-	\$3,600	\$3,807	-	\$5,076 ;medium	1-3 years
05 FIELD #1 - FRANK MANN		98,750	-	123,500	\$139,238	-	\$169,195;medium	3-10 years
05 FIELD #2 - SOCCER/BASEBALL		402,540	-	527,950	\$567,592	-	\$723,291;medium	3-10 years
05 FIELD #3 - UNFENCED		157,051	-	206,246	\$221,442	-	\$282,557;medium	3-10 years
05 FIELD #4 - SOCCER		230,016	-	310,932	\$324,323	-	\$425,977;low	3-10 years
06 RELOCATE DOG PARK		46,058	-	66,046	\$64,942	-	\$90,483;medium	1-3 years
07 CORA KELLY FITNESS EQUIPMENT		9,000	-	15,000	\$10,800	-	\$18,000;high	3-10 years
08 RELOCATE SPORT COURTS		101,137	-	141,209	\$142,604	-	\$193,456;high	1-3 years
08 RELOCATE PLAYGROUND		119,193	-	152,485	\$168,062	-	\$208,905;high	1-3 years
08 OPEN PLAY AREA		41,158	-	58,774	\$58,033	-	\$80,521;high	1-3 years
09 MILE MARKERS		6,000	-	6,000	\$7,200	-	\$7,200;high	1-3 years
10 ADD NEW HARD & SOFT TRAILS		45,000	-	720,000	\$45,000	-	\$720,000	3-10 years
11 ALLEYWAY LANDSCAPE BUFFER		51,618	-	62,391	\$61,941	-	\$74,869;high	3-10 years
12 PREFABRICATED BRIDGE INSTALLATION		1,269,200	-	535,000	\$1,789,572	-	\$732,950;high	1-3 years
13 CONSTRUCT STORMWATER MANAGEMENT				Coordinate with T&ES				TBD
14 COMMUNITY GARDEN		74,080	-	95,718	\$104,453	-	\$131,134;medium	3-10 years
15 CREATE OPEN-USE FIELD WITH SEATING		58,000	-	80,000	\$58,000	-	\$80,000	3-10 years
16 RESTORE COMMONWEALTH OPEN SPACE		111,960	-	136,713	\$157,863	-	\$187,297;medium	3-10 years
16 COMMONWEALTH FURNISHINGS		36,409	-	47,290	\$51,336	-	\$64,788;medium	3-10 years
17 RECYCLING CENTER		38,000	-	40,000	45,000	-	50,000	1-3 years
18 RENOVATE MUSTER ROOM		200,000	-	400,000	\$200,000	-	\$400,000;high	3-10 years
19 CORA KELLY TRAIL		321,851	-	523,629	\$453,811	-	\$717,371;high	3-10 years
21 PARK ENTRANCE FURNITURE		20,000	-	30,000	\$24,000	-	\$36,000;medium	3-10 years
20 PEDESTRIANIZE COMMONWEALTH AND REED UTILITY UPGRADES		112,500	-	140,000	\$158,625	-	\$191,800;high	1-3 years
SUBTOTAL		\$4,457,480	-	\$5,454,066				
	Soft Costs							
	CONTINGENCY			891,495.93			1,090,813.30	
	ENGINEERING			534,897.56			654,487.98	
	SURVEY			133,724.39			163,621.99	
	GEOTECHNICAL			89,149.59			109,081.33	
	ENVIRONMENTAL			178,299.19			218,162.66	
	PERMITTING			150,000.00			200,000.00	
GRAND TOTAL				\$6,435,046	-		\$7,890,234	

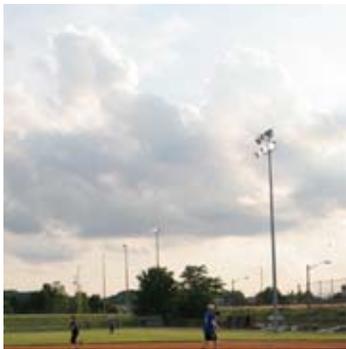
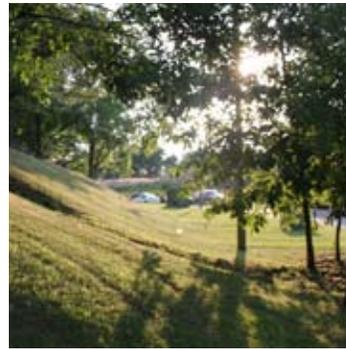
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JOSEPH HENSLEY PARK



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Background

Joseph Hensley Park (21.66 acres) is the southernmost citywide park in Alexandria and is located in the Eisenhower Corridor area. The Park is partially located in the flood basin of Cameron Run, a tributary stream of the Potomac River flowing through the north of the Park. Hensley is different from the rest of Alexandria's citywide parks because it is remotely located, apart from residential neighborhoods. The Capital Beltway, Eisenhower Avenue, WMATA Metrorail and CSX railroad track bound the Park.

While little is known about the history of the Hensley site, the historic Claremont Plantation was located only 500 feet south from the east end of the Park. Benjamin Dulany, a Revolutionary War loyalist to Great Britain and friend of George Washington, built Claremont Plantation in the late 18th century. The plantation passed through several hands including those of John Mason, the youngest son of George Mason, before serving as a small pox hospital for Union forces during the Civil War. In the second half of the 19th century, a railroad line was constructed along the northwest side of the Park, where the metro currently lies.

The City acquired a 13-acre portion of Hensley Park in 1977 with the assistance of a U.S. Land & Water Conservation Fund Act grant to supplement the use of City park bond funds. Today, Joseph Hensley Park is a destination park predominantly used for sports activities. The Park is named for the late Joseph Hensley, a former Director of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, who was highly involved in the development of the site's current uses. Hensley Park is home to a number of different recreational activities taking place throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall including Alexandria's Co-ed and Men's Softball, Bishop Ireton High School JV Softball and Lacrosse, DC Social Softball, Goombay Kickball, and several adult leagues sponsored by different area organizations.

Due to Hensley's secluded location and the heavy vehicle traffic at its borders, the majority of Park users drive to the site. There are no welcoming features placed at the entrance to the Park and its tall fence discourages visitors who might be interested in spending unprogrammed time in the Park. Furthermore, because of the site's remote location, there have been past security concerns that prompted the City to lock the Park when programmed sports activities are not going on, prohibiting open unorganized play.

Team Players at Hensley



On July 25, two different offices of the National Credit Union Administration suited up for a competitive game of baseball at Hensley Park. One side wore Chicago Cubs paraphernalia while the other sported gear of the District's own Washington Nationals. Since it was the offices' first annual game, the stakes were high for both teams. Co-workers crowded around the dugouts to cheer for their peers on the field and many gathered around table with food and drinks. Ralph Monaco and Jerry Poliquin, who both work for the Administration, speculated that the game would be one of many considering how much fun everyone was having.

The Park also has topographic challenges. The sports fields are divided amongst three levels, with the two easternmost fields separated from the restrooms, pavilion and third ballfield by a steep set of steps. The soccer field is at another higher level, surrounded by a fence with a locked gate. The soccer field does not have pedestrian connection to the restrooms or the rest of the Park. The lack of accessible ramps and paths make access throughout the park difficult and dangerous, particularly for users with disabilities.

Considering its location near two major roadways and its distance from the surrounding residential areas, Hensley is best suited for planned sports games and other events. Apart from sport activities, visitors occasionally rent the pavilion for events and make use of the picnic area. However, these pavilion activities are generally associated with events also scheduled at the ballfields and are seldom used for independent events. The pavilion is too small to host larger groups or festival activities. Because of minimal tree canopy in the Park, there is little shade other than the picnic pavilion.

The Park's fields and amenities need improvement in order to support their programmed uses in the long-term. The fields all suffer from poor turf and drainage. Many of the park's amenities, such as backstops and benches, are in need of replacement or repair. Hensley's existing 78 parking spaces are also insufficient to accommodate the flux of weekend visitors who drive to the park, and often park on grassy areas when paved spots are unavailable.

Alexandria Soccer Association and other partner organizations have stopped frequently using the site, decreasing the potential revenue the Department could gain from the fields. The site conditions also discourage park users who wish to passively use the sports fields and open space.¹

¹ In response to the various needs at Hensley Park, the City has already allocated \$175,000 of a development contribution to be used towards improvement projects at Hensley as a part of the Fiscal Year 2012-2021 Capital Improvement Program.

Community Feedback

Despite efforts to obtain community feedback, including online and hard copy-survey distribution and communication through athletic coaches, Park Planning received seven completed surveys for Hensley Park. There were no participants for the Hensley workshop. Therefore, Park Planning relied on information provided by the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB) members for feedback on Hensley Park.

The YSAB comments and comments from the seven completed surveys included the following:

- Address drainage issues on all three fields
- Provide synthetic turf on the upper field and improve parking
- Add more trees
- Improve parking
- Improve the turf condition of the softball fields

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The Plan

KEYED LEGEND

1. UPGRADE FIELDS WITH STANDARD DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS OR OTHER GOVERNING BODY FOR ADULT SPORTS
2. REPLACE, UPGRADE, AND REORGANIZE SPORT LIGHTING TO ACCOMMODATE NEW FIELDS
3. CONVERT SOCCER FIELD TO ARTIFICIAL TURF AND REPLACE SLOPE WITH RETAINING WALL & ACCESS RAMPS
4. EXPAND AND INCREASE CAPACITY OF PARKING LOT
5. FORMALIZE DRIVEWAY WITH TURNAROUND AND ACCESSIBLE PARKING
6. RELOCATE RESTROOMS CENTRAL TO ENTRY AREAS
7. PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE RAMP TO CONNECT UPPER AND LOWER AREAS
8. PROVIDE NEW SHELTER, PLAY FEATURES, MULTI-USE COURTS, AND ADULT FITNESS EQUIPMENT
9. PLANT NEW TREES TO REPLACE TREES REMOVED IN FIELD REORIENTATIONS AND EXPANSIONS
10. PROVIDE NEW PARKING LOT
11. EXTEND DRIVEWAY TO ALLOW ONE-WAY TRAFFIC EXIT AND ADDITIONAL WEEKEND PARALLEL PARKING
12. PROVIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT PARK ENTRANCE
13. RELOCATE EQUIPMENT STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE AREA
14. PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE WALKWAY TO PAVILION AND ACCESSIBLE VIEWING AREAS AT STAIRS
15. COMPLETE A DOCUMENTARY STUDY AND SOIL BORING STUDY
- A. **ALTERNATE PLAN:** BUILD INDOOR ATHLETIC FIELD HOUSE AT FIELD #2

GRAPHIC KEY



Recommendations & Implementation Strategy



The current drainage issues at the ballfields cause the infield mix to wash off into the parking lot and surrounding areas after poor weather conditions.



After poor weather, water saturates the soccer field.

1

Upgrade fields to standard dimensions of National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) or other governing body for adult sports.

We can maximize use of the baseball diamonds by upgrading them consistent with standards of NFHS or adult sport governing bodies. This will make Hensley a choice venue for official high school and other competitive leagues.

ESTIMATED COST: \$900,000 - \$1,200,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

2

Replace, upgrade, and reorganize sport lighting to accommodate new ballfields

Along with the reconfiguration and upgrade of the baseball diamonds and rectangular field, reconfiguring the current sports lighting will help ensure optimal use and safety at Hensley.

ESTIMATED COST: \$60,000 - \$80,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

3

Convert soccer field to synthetic turf and install access ramps

The soccer field at Hensley is in such poor condition that organizations such as the Alexandria Soccer Association no longer rents it, despite the field having lights. Installing artificial turf will allow for increased use of what once was a popular facility. Access ramps will make it easier for players and spectators to safely access the site.

ESTIMATED COST: \$1,500,000 - \$1,800,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

4

Expand western parking lot

The current parking lot near Hensley's rectangular field cannot accommodate all of the visitors during the field's heaviest use. The parking ratio standard for rectangular fields in RPCA's Athletic Facilities Allocation Policy suggests 40 legal parking spaces. The current lot holds 36 spaces; the proposed lot would hold 51 spaces, 3 of which would be disabled spaces, including one van accessible space.

ESTIMATED COST: \$275,000 - \$325,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

5

Formalize driveway with turnaround and disabled parking

Formalizing this driveway will make it easier for maintenance staff to access the West baseball diamond and the facilities surrounding it. It will also provide an accessible path to Hensley's restrooms.

ESTIMATED COST: \$420,000 - \$545,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



Though recently painted, the Hensley Restrooms are inefficient and reaching the end of their useful life span.



Many community members who rent pavilions for parties said they prefer not to rent Hensley because it lacks courts and play features for families.



Re-orienting field #2 will provide space for new park features, additional trees, and a parking lot.

6

Relocate restrooms central to entry areas

A new restroom facility would be more efficient, accessible, and sanitary for park users. The existing building is reaching the end of its useful life span.

ESTIMATED COST: \$312,750 - \$350,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

7

Provide accessible ramp to connect upper and lower areas

This accessible ramp will create a stronger connection between the different facilities at Hensley and a safer, more convenient route for park users to move to and from the upper and lower areas of the park. The current restrooms are inaccessible from the lower portion of the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$175,000 - \$225,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

8

Provide new play features, multi-use courts, and adult fitness equipment

While Hensley currently has a number of sports fields, it lacks facilities for non-team recreation. A new set of recreational facilities will increase the different types of uses at Hensley and provide recreational opportunities to a much larger group of residents. It will also provide activities for groups renting the picnic shelter. The proposed hard surface sport court can be used to host events, which can be viewed from the existing built in seating.

ESTIMATED COST: \$20,000 - \$25,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

9

Plant new trees to replace trees removed in field reorientations and expansions

The proposed new trees of appropriate native species will enhance the natural environment at Hensley. The trees will provide shade in the park and bolster the buffer between the park and the Capital Beltway. They will also expand the City's tree canopy, as recommended in the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

ESTIMATED COST: \$55,000 - \$67,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

10

Provide new parking lot

The current parking situation at Hensley cannot sufficiently accommodate visitors during sports games and, with the addition of new recreational facilities, Hensley will undoubtedly be in greater need of additional parking. The proposed parking lot can accommodate 30 spaces, which, in addition to the other parking spaces in the park, will meet the needs of the ballfields. The current lot includes 22 spaces; the proposed lot would hold 46 spaces.

ESTIMATED COST: \$375,000 - \$440,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

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When park visitors can't find parking spaces they park on the grass and on the fields, causing further damage to the surfaces and blocking the park emergency lanes.

11

Extend driveway to allow one-way traffic exit and additional weekend parallel parking

The extension of the driveway with a clear park entrance and exit will create improved circulation for vehicular traffic during times of peak use and provide greater access to emergency vehicles.

ESTIMATED COST: \$220,000 - \$270,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

12

Provide safety improvements to park entrance and remove locked gate

Park users predominantly drive to Hensley for programmed activities. However, the addition of courts, fitness equipment, and play features will create more opportunities for non-programmed recreation that will in turn encourage more people to walk, run or bike to Hensley. A safer and readily identifiable entrance is needed to accommodate vehicles and pedestrians accessing the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$6,200 - \$8,500 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



The Park entrance is insignificant and easy to miss. When the park is not programmed the swing gate is locked.

13

Relocate equipment storage and maintenance area

The proposed remote maintenance and storage area will include a shelter for park equipment and office structure for staff, two features that will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of Park Operations staff in their work to maintain the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$79,000 - \$125,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ years

14

Renovate and provide accessible viewing area at outdoor steps

The steps at the bottom of the slope dividing the upper and lower areas of the Park are a significant asset to the Park. These steps and walkway will provide excellent accessible seating for play feature or court spectators.

ESTIMATED COST: \$23,000 - \$38,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ years



The existing stairs serve as a viewing area and social gathering space.

15

Complete a Documentary Study and Soil Boring Study

The completion of a Documentary Study will allow for an understanding of this history of the site. Given that fill is present, a soil boring study will allow for a determination of the presence of buried soil levels containing potentially significant archaeological resources. This information can be used for future interpretive features and/or design.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ years

A

ALTERNATE PLAN: Build an indoor athletic field house

An 80,000 square foot indoor athletic field house and associated parking could fit in the existing footprint of field #2. At this size, the center of the field house could include an artificial rectangular field with a 60 foot ceiling clearance. The field could be divisible into halves and fourths for sideline-to-sideline practice and games.

ESTIMATED COST: \$2,880,000 - \$3,520,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ years

Overall Preliminary Cost Estimates

The estimated cost range (in 2013 dollars) shown below includes two scenarios: 1) If the recommendations were implemented independent of other projects and include associated soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental, permitting) and 2) a cost scenario in which all the recommendations are implemented together.

The priority for each recommendation is shown as “low, medium, or high.” RPCA determined these rankings based upon three factors: 1) park user safety, 2) community prioritization feedback and the results of the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, 3) life span of existing facility.

The proposed timeline for each recommendation considers the project priority, the project cost with relation to the Department budget and contingent upon the Capital Improvement Plan, and the construction sequencing of recommendation amongst other park projects.

DESCRIPTION	If recommendations are addressed all together as package		If recommendations are addressed individually (soft costs are loaded in each item)		Priority	Timeline	
WAYFINDING	\$10,078	-	\$12,910	\$12,093	-	\$15,491.64 high 1-3 years	
01 DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS ON ALL FIELDS	654,556	-	866,896	\$909,833	-	\$1,204,985.15 high 3-10 years	
02 RE-ORGANIZE SPORT LIGHTING	45,000	-	58,500	\$62,550	-	\$81,315.00 high 3-10 years	
03 CONVERT SOCCERFIELD TO ARTIFICIAL TURF	1,072,755	-	1,300,237	\$1,491,129	-	\$1,807,330.00 high 3-10 years	
04 PARKING EXPANSION	127,473	-	162,392	\$177,188	-	\$225,724.26 high 3-10 years	
05 DRIVEWAY	301,750	-	390,517	\$419,440	-	\$542,818.77 high 3-10 years	
06 RENOVATE RESTROOMS	225,000	-	250,000	\$312,750	-	\$347,500.00 high 3-10 years	
07 ADA RAMP TO RESTROOMS	128,575	-	159,982	\$178,719	-	\$222,375.59 high 3-10 years	
08 SPORTS COURTS	13,227	-	18,436	\$18,386	-	\$25,626.10 high 3-10 years	
08 ADULT FITNESS AND PLAY FEATURES	61,910	-	86,766	\$86,055	-	\$120,605.36 high 3-10 years	
09 FIELD EXPANSION PLANTING	40,638	-	48,766	\$56,487	-	\$67,784.12 high 3-10 years	
10 EASTERN PARKING LOT	199,454	-	243,920	\$277,241	-	\$339,048.63 high 3-10 years	
11 EISENHOWER DRIVEWAY	157,883	-	194,446	\$219,458	-	\$270,279.84 high 3-10 years	
12 ENTRANCE IMPROVEMENT	4,500	-	6,000	\$6,255	-	\$8,340.00 high 3-10 years	
13 RELOCATE EQUIPMENT STORAGE AREA	56,794	-	89,830	\$78,944	-	\$124,863.48 medium 10 years+	
14 RENOVATE SPECTATOR SEATING	16,465	-	27,242	\$22,886	-	\$37,866.31 medium 10 years+	
UTILITY UPGRADES	110,000	-	137,500	\$152,900	-	\$191,125.00 High 1-3 years	
SUBTOTAL	\$3,226,064	-	\$4,054,340				
	Soft Costs	CONTINGENCY	645,212.83	-	810,867.93		
		ENGINEERING	387,127.70	-	486,520.76		
		SURVEY	96,781.92	-	121,630.19		
		GEOTECHNICAL	64,521.28	-	81,086.79		
		ENVIRONMENTAL	64,521.28	-	81,086.79		
	PERMITTING	150,000.00	-	200,000.00			
GRAND TOTAL		\$4,634,229	-	\$5,835,532			

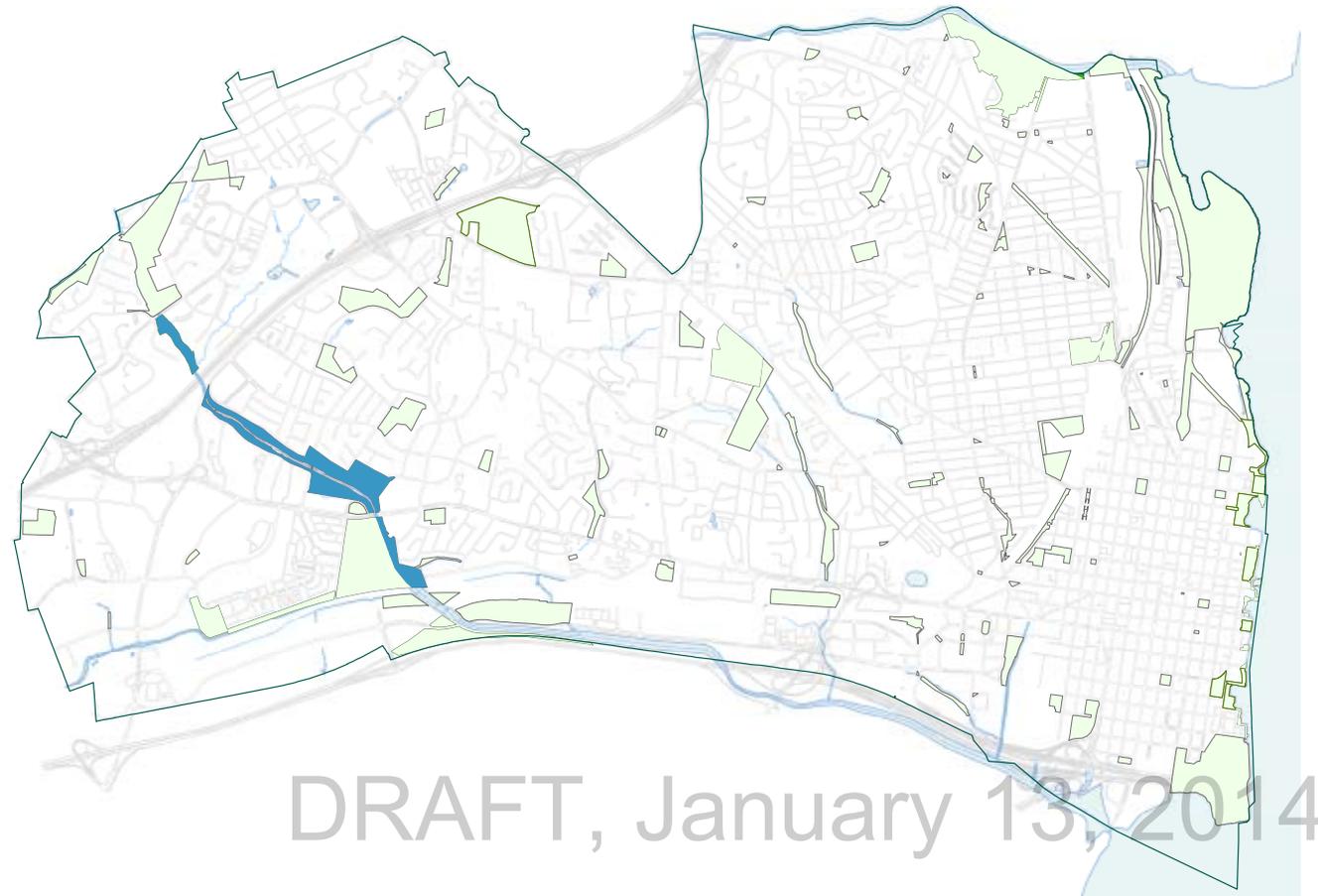
Note: Alternative Field House is not included in grand total. If pursued, the grand total would range from \$7,500,000 to \$9,500,000

HOLMES RUN PARK SYSTEM

ALL VETERANS PARK

BROOKVALLEY PARK

TARLETON PARK



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Background

Park Profiles: James H. Marx

Holmes Run Park System (62.51 acres) is a linear open space along Holmes Run, a resource-rich stream that traverses the west half of Alexandria's West End. As a greenway it includes four distinct spaces: Holmes Run Scenic Easement, Brookvalley Park, James Marx H. All Veterans Park, and Tarleton Park. These spaces are connected by a single trail system that reaches the Dora Kelley Nature Center to its north and Tarleton Park to its south, and connects to Ben Brenman Park over a bridge to the west.

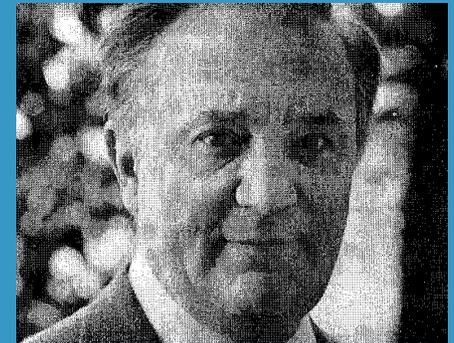
These spaces are also connected by a rich history. In 1706, the Greenway was all part of a 4,639 acre land grant that was gradually divided into several farmsteads over the 18th and 19th centuries. The Strathblane house, which still stands today at 4630 Strathblane Lane, was built in 1817 a short distance from today's park system. Though the house sits outside of the greenway, much of the greenway's territory was once a part of the Strathblane estate and most likely contains remnants of the Strathblane Cemetery. In the early 19th century Cloud's Mill was built to the south of Holmes Run and traces of the mill race can still be found along the greenway.

The James H. Marx All Veterans Memorial Park, was dedicated in May 30, 1994 in remembrance of James H. Marx Sr., a beloved West End civic leader. Marx worked tirelessly to acquire, reclaim, and develop the parkland along Holmes Run Greenway and took a special interest in the area of All Veterans Park (see sidebar).

All Veterans Park was originally a creek bed until it was filled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after Hurricane Agnes struck Alexandria in 1972 causing Lake Barcroft to flood the Holmes Run channel. It was then used as a storage area for dredged gravel and debris collection until Marx and other members of the Holmes Run Committee began working with city officials to convert the site into parkland. Marx wanted the park to be named "All Veterans" to memorialize Alexandria veterans of all wars. The City Council decided on "All Veterans" for the park's name but, after Marx's death a few days following the decision, Council immediately changed the name to also honor the park's most dedicated proponent.

Today, the linear park is full of scenic beauty and nature, the Holmes Run Greenway is abundant with natural resources and opportunities for passive recreation. Whether jogging alongside the quiet stream or contemplating beneath the branches of an old Bitternut Hickory, White Oak, or the Bicentennial Tree (the oldest tree in Alexandria), visitors reap the benefits of interacting with a biodiversity of life throughout the Greenway. A 2.5 mile shared-use path on the north side of Holmes Run Parkway is heavily used by cyclists, families, joggers, and dog walkers who frequent the trail simultaneously. The Greenway is also heavily used as a commuter route. Trail systems for walking and jogging are strongly desired by Alexandria residents as identified in the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment.

James H. Marx Sr. was a caring and engaged neighbor and friend to the many Alexandrian's that knew him. According to the hard-working Navy veteran, "If you live somewhere, you have a responsibility to become a part of it." Marx exemplified this proverb through serving in a number of civic leadership positions in Alexandria. At the time of his death, Marx was chairman of the Holmes Run Committee, a coalition of ten civic and condominium associations formed in 1982. As chairman, Marx worked closely with his good friend and secretary of the Committee, Ben Brenman, to develop Holmes Run Greenway and address issues related to West End.



Marx's civic leadership in Alexandria was coupled with a lifetime of service to his country. Marx joined the Navy in 1943 and served aboard the USS Missouri and various warships in the years following World War II. After retiring from the Navy, Marx served as president of the Navy Federal Credit Union, where he helped establish United Community National Bank, a minority-owned bank in D.C. From 1970 to 1991, Marx worked in various positions at the Department of Commerce. One of these positions enabled him to develop and implement national policy on the formation of minority-owned savings banks, insurance companies, and small business investment companies.

Sources:

- Rich Blake, "West End civic activist Jim Marx mourned by friends, city leaders," *The Gazette Packet*, March 11, 1993, 12-13.
- Melinda Jensen, "West Ender takes responsibility for his community," *The Gazette Packet*, October, 6, 1989.
- Brenman, Bernard. Homes Run Committee to Councilwoman Del Pepper and Councilman Kerry Donley, March 15, 1993. Letter. City Manager's Office (June 2013)

Walking Holmes Run



Ed Smith has lived in West End, Alexandria for six years. Ed, a professional dog walker, loves walking dogs along the Holmes Run Greenway. To Ed, the Greenway trails are great to walk because they are close to the water and have plenty of shade. During his walks, Ed often sees interesting birds like Blue Herons along the water and stops to marvel at the scenic beauty of the Greenway. Ed is excited about the proposed improvements to the Holmes Run Greenway, particularly the formalized trail on the South side of Holmes Run.

The stream, the premier asset of the Greenway, is infringed upon by invasive species growing along the steep slopes of its banks. There are areas along the stream especially near the All Veterans Park area of Holmes Run where invasive plants have grown so dense that they block the view of the stream and create dangerous, hidden areas. While there are several designated entrances to the Greenway, they are not easily accessible for people with limited mobility and do not fully comply with the American Disabilities Act Standards.

Once in the Park System, park users find that the pathways are not interconnected, especially those in All Veterans Park which dead end at the easternmost part of the Park. There is a lack of clear and consistent signage identifying sites and directing park visitors throughout the Greenway. Storm water management is also a significant factor affecting access to the trail, which frequently floods at its low points.¹

The greenway also lacks the programs and amenities needed to serve a wider range of park users' needs, such as a welcoming space for picnics, frisbee throwing, or other passive recreational activity. All Veterans Park has potential to be a great space for unorganized recreation; however, it is currently seldom-used due to its lack of shade, inefficient design, and insufficient facilities. Play and exercise equipment scattered throughout the park could help draw people to the Park and be a strong neighborhood asset, but, much of the existing equipment is outdated and new features are needed in order to provide play and exercise opportunities to all age groups.

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¹ To address some of the flooding concerns, the City of Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services is currently reviewing options for improving the portion of the trail beneath the 395 overpass.

HOLMES RUN PARK: EXISTING CONDITIONS

-  HARD TRAILS
-  SOFT TRAILS
-  PARK BOUNDS
-  ACTIVITY AREA (PLAYGROUND, PICNIC AREA, GARDENS)



Community Feedback

From September through early December 2012, RPCA solicited input on the existing conditions and possible future uses for Holmes Run Park.

To gather information, RPCA held a public workshop to discuss park needs, distributed an online survey asking for feedback, and placed hard copy surveys in boxes located at entrances to the park, and in the mailboxes of adjacent neighborhood homes. Staff also visited events, local businesses, and a nearby senior center to hold “mobile workshops.” The survey asked park users to identify their usual point of access into the parks, the mode of transportation they use to get there, their typical park activities, what they like about the park, and what areas of the park need improvement. Survey participants also prioritized their improvement needs. See the appendix for detailed community feedback reports.

RPCA received 94 completed surveys. Of those surveyed, 64 participants lived in the 22304 zip code. Fewer than 5 participants lived in each of the other Alexandria zip codes or outside City limits. The majority of those who visit do so daily (33%) or weekly (37%).

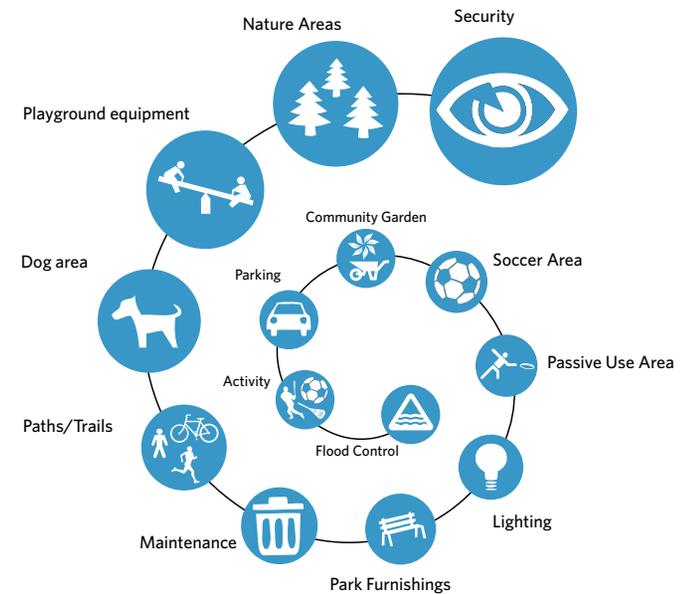
This is what we heard:

Sixty percent walk to Holmes Run Park; 19% bike and only 14% drive. This high number of pedestrians demonstrates how Holmes Run is considered a large park with a strong neighborhood use, attracting leisurely activity. It also implies the need to review safer pedestrian and cyclist access throughout the Park.

When asked, “**What do you do in the Park?**” almost all participants stated that they go for unorganized, passive park uses. The highest use was to walk (29%). Other popular activities included relaxing (17%), biking (19%), running (12%) and walking dog(s) (11%). All of these activities are multi-generational and can occur individually or in vary small groups.

In answering, “**What do you like about the Park,**” participants were consistent in identifying the natural character of the Park’s setting. Over 30% specifically commented that they like the Park because of nature. Comments included, “[I like] the large, old trees along the bike path, the stream and the wildlife (especially the occasional heron), and the chance it gives my children to experience ‘the woods’ in the middle of the City” and “[I like] the wooded natural area next to the stream...able to see wildlife: deer, hawks, foxes, etc.”

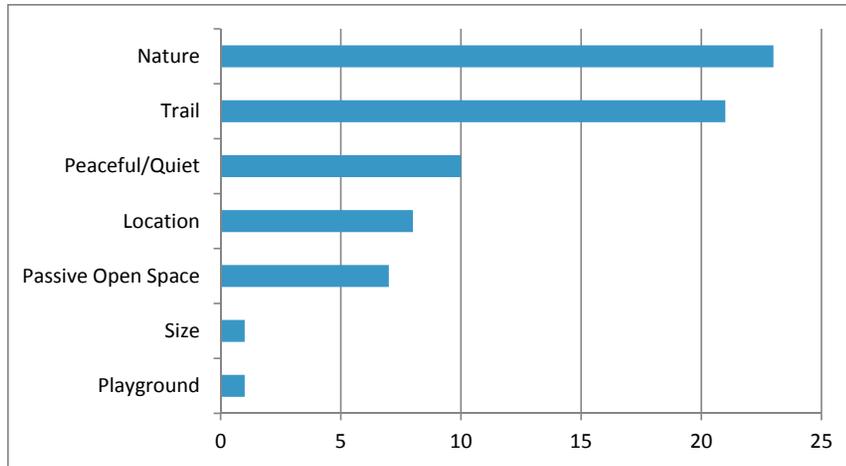
What needs improvement in Holmes Run Park?



The highest priority is shown as the largest circle; the lowest priority is the smallest circle. Priorities are based on the number of responses to needed improvements and then weighted by how participants prioritized their answers

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What do you like about the Park?



The trail is a clear asset of the Park, both locally and regionally. Respondents liked that the trail is quiet, but also connected to places of convenience, such as the Foxchase Shopping Center.

There are some consistent themes throughout the three methods of community feedback. These include:

Security

The survey and workshop indicate that security is a major concern in the Park. As suggested by the police and discussed in the workshop, one easy way to address the security situation is to remove vegetation to increase views and surveillance and to install mile markers along the trail so that park users can easily identify where in the park they are. Many respondents asked for better lighting in the park.

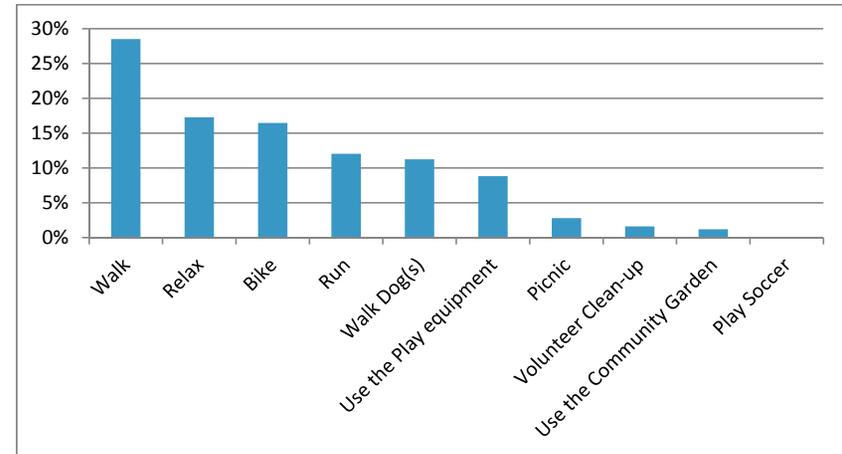
Shared-Use Trail

The shared-use path in Holmes Run is highly active and used by runners, cyclists, and pedestrians. Because the path is heavily used, markings to separate the uses may help assist cyclists and children. Flood/drainage control is also a big concern along the trail.

Natural Areas

Holmes Run Park is one of the most beautiful, natural areas of the City. Its quiet, peaceful setting is what draws many people to the neighborhood to live and recreate. However, throughout the park there are areas where invasive plants pose a threat to the native wildlife. An effort to remove and curtail the overgrowth could help enrich the Park's natural health.

What do you do in the Park?



All Veterans Park

Throughout the survey results, many people stated that there needs to be a draw to the Park for family use. The All Veterans Park portion of the Park has potential to be an area for passive play, such as picnics, frisbee, or other unorganized recreational activity. As suggested during the workshop, a re-design of this portion of the park may enhance the space and provide a setting for bridge connections between the Charles Beatley Library and Holmes Run trail.

Play equipment

Many of the play equipment pieces scattered throughout the Park are out of date. While some pieces have recently been replaced, more equipment and natural play features that cater to a range of age could become a greater neighborhood asset.

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The Plan

KEYED LEGEND

1. MINIMIZE FLOOD IMPACT FOR TRAIL UNDERPASSES
2. PROTECT AGAINST EROSION ALONG BANKS
3. IMPROVE STORAGE AND EDGING FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS
4. REMOVE INVASIVE SPECIES AND CREATE OPEN VIEWSHEDS THROUGHOUT PARK FOR SAFETY AND ECOLOGICAL HEALTH
5. REPLACE AND RENOVATE PICNIC AREAS
6. CONSTRUCT ACCESSIBLE SOUTH SIDE TRAIL AND INCREASE ACCESS FROM HOLMES RUN PARKWAY
7. ADD NATURAL PLAY AREAS
8. EXPAND FITNESS STATION
9. ADD LIGHTS TO BEATLEY BRIDGE AND TO THE ADJOINING SECTION OF THE NORTH SIDE TRAIL
10. DIVIDE DOG PARK FOR LARGE AND SMALL DOGS
11. FORMALIZE SOFT TRAIL
12. ADD TRAIL MARKINGS FOR IMPROVED SAFETY AT N. JORDAN ST.
13. CONNECT JAMES MARX-ALL VETERANS PARK WITH HOLMES RUN TRAIL CIRCULATION AND DUKE ST. DOG PARK
14. MODIFY JAMES MARX-ALL VETERANS PARK TO PROVIDE ENHANCED VISIBILITY AND PASSIVE PARK USE
15. MOVE JAMES MARX MEMORIAL TO ENHANCE VISIBILITY FROM STREET IN CONJUNCTION WITH PARK MODIFICATIONS
16. INSTALL BRIDGE TO CONNECT JAMES MARX-ALL VETERANS PARK TO CHARLES BEATLEY LIBRARY
17. INSTALL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SITE WITH EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT
18. ADD NEW PICNIC SHELTER TO JAMES MARX-ALL VETERANS PARK
19. COMPLETE A DOCUMENTARY STUDY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

GRAPHIC KEY

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PRIMARY TRAILS	SECONDARY TRAILS	SOFT TRAILS	PARK BOUNDS	PROPOSED ENTRANCE PLAZA	PROPOSED PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS	ACTIVITY AREA (PLAYGROUND, PICNIC AREA, GARDENS)



Recommendations & Implementation Strategy



The trail often floods, particularly under the 395 overpass, and in many places the banks have severe erosion.



The edging around the community garden is haphazard.



Views of the stream are blocked by “walls” of invasive species.

1

Minimize flood impact for trail underpasses

Flooding frequently overtakes the trail and renders areas of the trail impassable, particularly at the fair weather crossing. Improvements to the trail include raising the trail, construction of a pedestrian bridge from the existing stairs to the north side pathway, and improved energy efficient lighting.

COST: \$4,000,000 (already in approved budget) PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years
ACTION: Department of Implementation to conduct final design and construction of improvements on Holmes Run Trail, from Ripley Street though I-395

2

Protect against erosion along banks

Securing the banks along the Greenway will help protect the creek channel and maintain safe access to the water. This action specifically coincides with Alexandria’s Environmental Action Plan, which includes the objective to “Restore and stabilize stream banks of all streams to promote healthy habitat, biotic integrity, and to minimize erosion.”

SUGGESTED ACTION: T&ES review and recommend

3

Improve storage and edging for community gardens

Standardized edging will highlight the community gardens as a distinguished feature of the park along the south-side trail. Storage space will help gardeners maintain a tidy and productive garden. *Note: Storage type must adhere to Resource Protection Area guidelines and can not accommodate fertilizers and pesticides.*

ESTIMATED COST: \$22,500 - \$37,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

4

Remove invasive species and open viewsheds throughout park for safety and ecological health

Invasive species along the Greenway such as certain types of ivy, honeysuckle, bamboo, and kudzu significantly degrade the natural habitat and prevent the natural succession of native plants. Removing these invasives will restore biodiversity to the Greenway and, in turn, provide park users greater access and visibility to Holmes Run. The removal of invasive plants and any subsequent planting will adhere to the City’s Environmental Action Plan.

ESTIMATED COST: \$57,000 - \$47,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



The Park's only picnic area is not fully accessible and is an undefined area.

5

Replace and renovate picnic areas

The proposed new picnic areas complete with new grills, trash cans, tables, and gazebos will increase visitor experience and provide outdoor gathering space for adjacent neighbors, many of whom live in apartment complexes without private outdoor space.

ESTIMATED COST: \$78,000 - \$110,000

PRIORITY: high

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



Park users have formed a "desire line" along the length of the south side of the Park after years of walking along the same stretch.

6

Construct accessible south side trail and increase access from Holmes Run Parkway

A formal trail will replace the desire line on the South side of the Greenway. This project is supported by strong desire in the 2011 and 2013 Needs Assessment for walking trails. The current "desire line" is across the street from high rise buildings with a very high concentration of senior residents, yet the park is inaccessible. The proposed trail will be connected to the sidewalks along Holmes Run Parkway by curb ramps with detectable warning surfaces for park users who are blind or have low vision. A porous pavement is desired at this location because it is in a Resource Protection Area.

ESTIMATED COST: \$570,000 - \$1,000,000

PRIORITY: high

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



Boulders and other natural play features to climb, such as those shown above, would be appropriate for the character of Holmes Run Park.

7

Add natural play areas

Environmentally-sensitive and nature-inspired play equipment such as boulders and climbing structures will provide alternative recreational opportunities for children and make the Greenway a more family-friendly environment.

ESTIMATED COST: \$32,000 - \$42,000

PRIORITY: medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

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RPCA recently installed new Chin Up Bars in Holmes Run Park.

8

Expand fitness station

RPCA recently replaced part of the adult fitness equipment, creating enhanced exercise opportunities along the North side of the trail. Additional equipment would complete the site.

EXPECTED COMPLETION: SPRING 2014



Many nearby residents cross the Beatley Bridge to get to bus stops on Duke Street as part of their daily commute. The lack of lighting makes this walk feel unsafe, particularly during winter months.

9

Add lights to Beatley Bridge and to the adjoining section of the north side trail and bring bridge up to standard

RPCA installed mile markers with solar lights to the north side trail in June 2013. New solar lights added to Beatley Bridge and the adjoining part of the North side trail will assist those that use the park on their commute to Duke Street. These lights will cut off at 10:00 p.m. to discourage park use outside of the Greenway's official hours. Also, the bridge's hand railings do not meet today's safety standard and need to be brought up to code.

ESTIMATED COST: \$82,500 - \$116,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



A number of survey respondents voiced concern that the vast dog park is unsafe for smaller dogs when large dogs are in the area.

10

Divide dog park for large and small dogs

The division of Duke Street dog park is in response to many requests that there be delineated individual spaces for small and large dogs. This division requires broader community discussion and an amendment to the existing City of Alexandria Dog Park Master Plan.

ESTIMATED COST: \$35,000 - \$45,000 PRIORITY: Low PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



The park entrance at Raleigh Avenue is undefined.

11

Formalize soft trail

A mulched, planted trail around the bicentennial tree and connection to Raleigh Avenue will create a comfortable route, differing from the existing foot paths that are currently used to enter and exit the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$110,000 - \$136,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

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Pedestrians, cyclists, and strollers cross paths at the North Jordan entrance to the Park.

12

Add trail markings for improved safety at North Jordan Street

The Holmes Run trails are shared by park users of different age, participating in a diversity of activities –walking, jogging, running, biking, pushing a stroller, etc. Trail markings at North Jordan Street will help encourage continued shared use of the trails.

ESTIMATED COST: \$500 - \$1,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



13

Connect James Marx All Veterans Park with Holmes Run Trail circulation and Duke St. Dog Park

With enhanced integration to the surrounding areas of the Greenway, All Veterans Park will attract more park users and become a more comfortable and safer place for passive recreation.

ESTIMATED COST: \$315,000 - \$400,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



14

Modify James Marx All Veterans Park to provide enhanced visibility and passive park use

James Marx All Veterans Park is one of the few contiguous open spaces along Holmes Run Greenway. With improved grading, it can provide a place of peaceful respite as it was intended when dedicated as park space. Its location along the streambed provides a unique opportunity for spectacular views of ecological resources in an urban environment.

ESTIMATED COST: \$162,000 - \$245,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



15

Move James Marx Memorial to enhance visibility from street in conjunction with park re-design

This plan proposes moving the James Marx Memorial to be a prominent entry location that is an integral feature of the Park. It will be clearly visible to park users and visitors on the Holmes Run Parkway and North Pickett Street and is a location selected by James Marx's family.

ESTIMATED COST: \$4,500 - \$6,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

Given its location next to the stream and easy access from North Pickett Street, James Marx All Veterans Parks has the potential to be a premier park in the West End, yet its current condition and design feels unsafe and isolated.

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The pathways in James Marx All Veterans Park are not contiguous, making it feel unsafe for individuals. Also, despite a great need for outdoor gathering spaces on the West End, its lack of amenities deters park users.



A stormwater BMP at North Pickett Street will remove many of the invasive species that have taken over the viewshed.

16

Install bridge to connect James Marx All Veterans Park to Charles Beatley Library

This connection will open up All Veterans Park, allowing for better visibility and circulation. Citizens will have the benefit of utilizing two valuable public resources in tandem, the Park and Library. This improvement is coincidentally similar to James Marx's vision of a viewing deck connecting the Park area with the Library, where citizens could enjoy reading or lounging with the scenic view of Holmes Run in the distance.

ESTIMATED COST: \$670,000 - \$916,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 years

17

Install stormwater management site with educational component

The City is evaluating the feasibility of stormwater treatment forebay(s) in the existing Old Holmes Run area near the west end of the Park. This site provides an opportunity to treat untreated stormwater runoff from the area west of the Park. Stormwater treatment forebay(s) will help reduce the amount of debris, sediment and pollutants (phosphorous and nitrogen) discharging into the existing channel. Enhancement of the existing wetland functionality and design is also being evaluated. Since the area is between a library and a park, the site would provide a great educational opportunities for students, children, and residents. Educational interpreted signage can help explain the stormwater benefits of the stormwater forebays and existing wetland.

ACTION: T&ES to complete engineering feasibility

18

Add new picnic shelter to James Marx All Veterans Park

A new picnic shelter in James Marx All Veterans Park will encourage passive use of the space by providing a place where the park's users may congregate.

ESTIMATED COST: \$42,000 - \$56,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

19

Complete a Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation

The completion of the Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation will allow for an understanding of the history of the site and the locations of significant resources (including a possible cemetery, Native American camps, and evidence of 18th and 19th-century sites). These are needed for current and future interpretive, planning and management decisions and can guide the potential placement of interpretive markers to educate residents about the area's history and enrich the visitor experience by providing a connection to the past.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

Overall Preliminary Cost Estimates

The estimated cost range (in 2013 dollars) shown below includes two scenarios: 1) If the recommendations were implemented independent of other projects and include associated soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental, permitting) and 2) a cost scenario in which all the recommendations are implemented together.

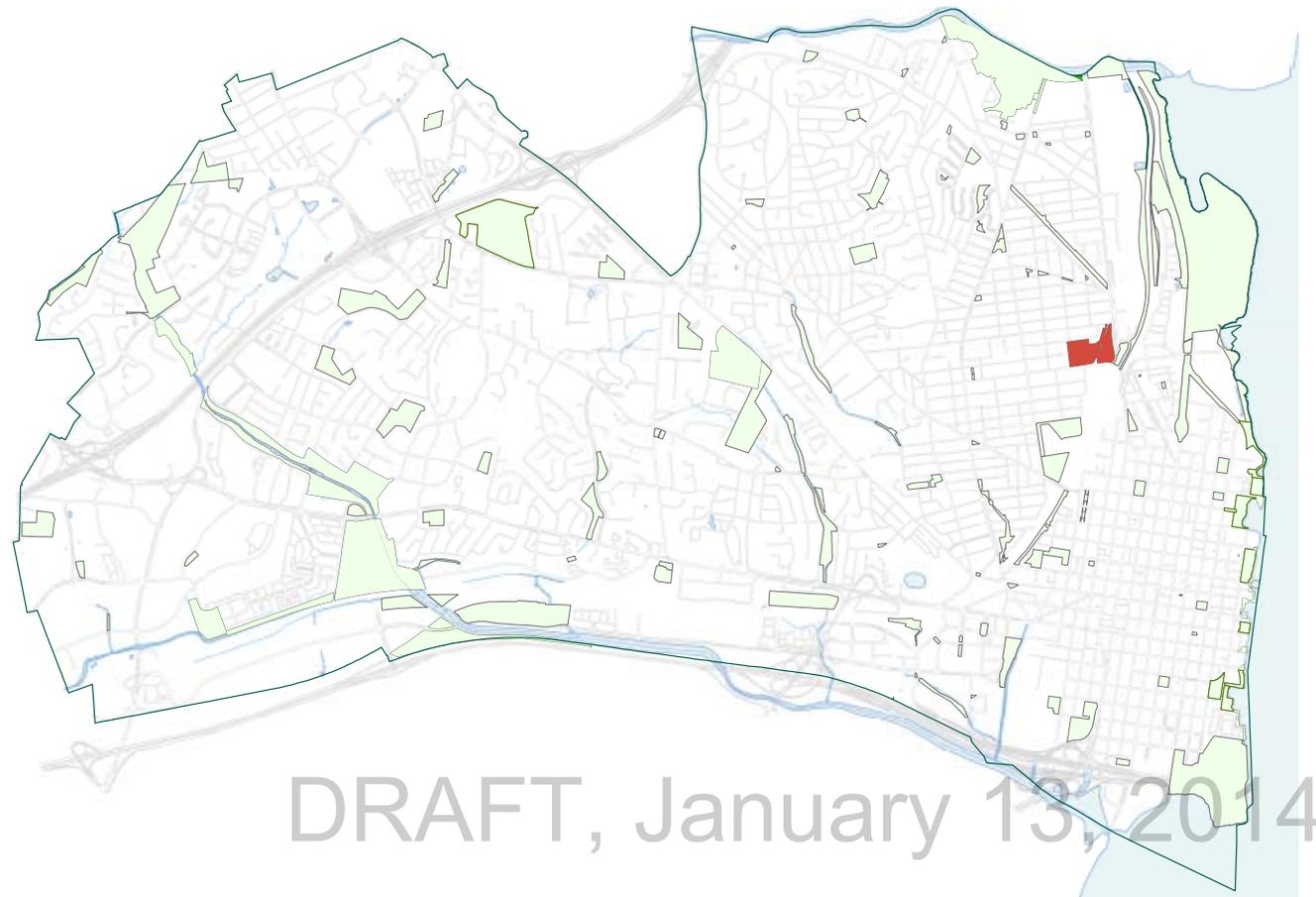
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The proposed timeline for each recommendation considers the project priority, the project cost with relation to the Department budget and contingent upon the Capital Improvement Plan, and the construction sequencing of recommendation amongst other park projects.

ESTIMATED COST RANGES

DESCRIPTION	If recommendations are addressed all together as package		If recommendations are addressed individually (soft costs are loaded in each item)		Priority	Timeline		
WAYFINDING	\$11,178	-	\$14,285	\$13,414	-	\$17,142	high	1-3 years
01 IMPROVE FLOOD CONTROL	TES PROJECT		N/A	-	-	N/A	high	
02 PROTECT AGAINST EROSION ALONG BANKS	TES PROJECT		N/A	-	-	N/A	medium	3-10 years
03 COMMUNITY GARDEN IMPROVEMENTS	16,000	-	26,000	\$22,560	-	\$36,660	medium	3-10 years
04 INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL	47,302	-	47,302	\$56,762	-	\$47,302	high	3-10 years
05 ADD NEW PICNIC GROUNDS	55,156	-	77,848	\$77,769	-	\$109,766	high	3-10 years
06 NEW ADA SOUTHSIDE TRAIL	405,546	-	762,084	\$571,820	-	\$1,074,539	high	3-10 years
07 ADD NATURAL PLAY FEATURES	22,500	-	30,000	\$31,725	-	\$42,300	medium	3-10 years
08 EXPAND FITNESS STATIONS	COMPLETE		N/A	-	-	N/A		
09 BEATLEY BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS	58,500	-	82,000	\$82,485	-	\$115,620	High	3-10 years
10 DOG PARK IMPROVEMENTS	24,592	-	32,140	\$34,675	-	\$45,317	Low	3-10 years
11 FOREST TRAIL	78,146	-	97,084	\$110,185	-	\$136,889	High	3-10 years
12 TRAIL MARKINGS AT N. JORDAN STREET	500	-	1,000	\$600	-	\$1,200	High	3-10 years
13 ALL VETERANS/HOLMES RUN TRAILS	223,050	-	288,090	\$314,500	-	\$406,207	High	3-10 years
14 REGRADE ALL VETERANS PARK	115,091	-	172,963	\$162,279	-	\$243,877	High	3-10 years
15 RELOCATE JAMES MARX MEMORIAL	3,115	-	4,294	\$4,392	-	\$6,054	High	3-10 years
16 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT	TES PROJECT		N/A	-	-	N/A		
17 INSTALL BRIDGE	475,500	-	650,000	\$670,455	-	\$916,500	High	3-10 years
18 ADD PICNIC SHELTER	30,000	-	40,000	\$42,300	-	\$56,400	Medium	3-10 years
UTILITY UPGRADES	105,000	-	130,000	\$148,050	-	\$183,300	High	1-3 years
SUBTOTAL	\$1,671,176	-	\$2,455,090					
	CONTINGENCY	334,235.18	-	491,017.95				
	ENGINEERING	200,541.11	-	294,610.77				
	SURVEY	50,135.28	-	73,652.69				
	GEOTECHNICAL	33,423.52	-	49,101.80				
	ENVIRONMENTAL	66,847.04	-	98,203.59				
	PERMITTING	150,000.00	-	200,000.00				
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,506,358	-	\$3,661,677					

SIMPSON STADIUM PARK



DRAFT, January 13, 2014



Background

Eugene Simpson Stadium Park (Simpson Park) is an integral 15-acre open space that connects various points of the Del Ray neighborhood. Del Ray residents regularly gather in Simpson Park facilities, including the dog park and playground, and walk or bike through the Park to connect between the north and south sections of the neighborhood. Sports players and spectators, including the T.C. Williams Baseball team and the Congressional Softball League, travel from elsewhere in the City and region, mainly by vehicle, to use the popular sports fields. This is the type of community focused recreational use the City envisioned when the Park was developed in the 1950's.

According to the 1894 Hopkins map of the Washington, D.C. area, St. Asaph's Junction Station operated in the North East area of Simpson Park and linked major rail lines until it was demolished in the 1950's. There were also many Civil War era houses, including an Alms/Poor House that once stood in the area of Simpson Park that is now the dog park. In the late 1940's the land was donated to the City. In 1953, Eugene Simpson contributed funds to build the two ballfields, known as "Big Simpson" and "Little Simpson", on the site, envisioning a central location for Alexandria sports teams to play. Since that time, the City developed the park programs and facilities surrounding the fields incrementally.

A walking trail loops around Big Simpson field, though the paths extending beyond this main loop to other facilities are not well incorporated and lack formal and clear entrances. The paths also do not integrate with the adjacent neighborhoods as there are insufficient curb cuts at appropriate locations. As a result, visitors enter wherever convenient creating "desire lines" in the landscape. These informal entrances, such as the slope adjacent to Monroe Avenue, have eroded over time. Many park signs are outdated and do not clearly guide Park users through the site to various facilities.

Through the park planning process, park users expressed the need for more parking, particularly for sports field users. The site was originally built to accommodate two ballfields with parking needs met in both the Simpson Park parking lot and in the YMCA's adjacent parking lot (through a shared-use agreement). As the City built additional facilities, including the soccer fields and dog park, the demand for parking increased. The majority of the time park users can locate parking spaces, however, when all of the fields are in use simultaneously, particularly on weekend mornings in the spring and fall, availability decreases. Park



On Opening Night in June of 1953, the Simpson baseball diamond, now affectionately known as Little Simpson, was considered one of the top youth baseball fields in the country. More than 1,000 wide-eyed spectators crowded the stands from foul pole to foul pole. Some spectators hung over the outfield fence. The game was announced by Arch McDonald, the voice of Major League's Baseball's Washington Senators and covered by several Washington-area newspapers. A number of local dignitaries including Virginia Congressman Joel T. Broyhill watched the game from the press box. "It was quite an experience for an 11 or 12-year-old boy standing there with all those people watching," recalled Dennis Shaw, an outfielder for Simpson Development's team, who would later go on to teach and coach at T.C. Williams. "The park was just immaculate."

Over a half century later, Alexandria youth baseball continues to flourish thanks to dedicated volunteer participation and the continuous support of sponsors and donors. Some of the current sponsors have generously supported the City's youth baseball since Alexandria's Little Major League first opened at Simpson Stadium more than a half a century ago.

Source:

"Alexandria Youth Baseball at Simpson: 50 years and counting," Alexandria Little League Newsletter 1 (2003): 1, 3-5.

Playing at Simpson



TJ Lipple, a resident of Del Ray, Alexandria, loves hanging out with his son Eliot at Simpson Stadium Park's playground. He also enjoys watching the Alexandria Little League at Simpson, especially the home-run derby during the all-star weekend. TJ feels very fortunate to have a neighborhood park that hosts such exciting activities. Simpson is especially valuable to TJ, who shared that many of his friends do not have the luxury of convenient and nearby open spaces where they can take their kids.

neighbors have also expressed concern about visitors parking in adjacent residential neighborhoods during peak field use times. Further complicating the situation, the on-site parking lot does not have adequate dimensions for turning, forcing cars to conduct three point turns to exit.

The sports facilities at Simpson Park are in particularly high demand because they provide good playing conditions, are centrally located, and the ballfields are lit, but there is a need for general improvements. The diamond fields lack facilities for concessions and adequate storage, both for maintenance and sports equipment. Storage containers scattered throughout the site are visually unappealing and take up valuable open space. Big Simpson baseball field continually exhibits drainage challenges. Also, while the diamond fields and soccer fields are heavily used, they are only available for programmed activities and locked when not used by organized teams. This security system allows the fields to rest between play and maintain their good condition but prohibits open unorganized play.

Unlike the fields, Simpson Park's basketball court is not fenced. This highly visible court is amongst the most heavily used in the City, with players using them throughout the day and up until 10:00pm when the lights shut off. Simpson Park also attracts many visitors throughout the day to its dog park, which facilitates a strong community amongst area dog owners. The dog park, though used during dark hours, does not have lighting and the hill is quickly eroding. There is also poor drainage in the dog area. The playground, predominately used by children under five years old, is another area of the Park brings neighborhood families together but has older equipment.

The Master Gardeners of North Virginia, a dedicated group of volunteers, have maintained a formal garden south of the playground since 1993. The garden demonstrates waterwise plants, plants that attract butterflies, and alpine plants in a rock garden. This small area of the Park also has benches that provide space to relax.

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Community Feedback

From September through early December 2012, RPCA solicited input on the existing conditions and possible future uses for Simpson Park.

To gather information, RPCA held a public workshop to discuss park needs, distributed an online survey asking for feedback, and placed hard copy surveys in boxes located at entrances to the park, and in the mailboxes of adjacent neighborhood homes. Staff also visited events, local businesses, and the Del Ray Citizens Association Meeting to hold “mobile workshops.” The survey asked park users to identify their usual point of access into the parks, the mode of transportation they use to get there, their typical park activities, what they like about the park, and what areas of the park need improvement. Survey participants also prioritized their improvement needs. See the appendix for detailed community feedback reports.

RPCA received 244 completed surveys. Of those surveyed, 149 participants lived in the 22301 zip code, 35 lived in the 22302, 26 lived in 22305, and 23 lived in 22314. Fewer than 15 participants lived in each of the other Alexandria zip codes or outside City limits. The majority of those who visit do so weekly (49%), though 32% visit daily.

This is what we heard:

Fifty percent walk to Simpson Park, 46% drive and only 4% bike. Of those that drive, most are using the sports fields. This high number of vehicles demonstrates both a need to consider parking options when the fields are in heavy use and to review opportunities for encouraging safer pedestrian and cyclist access into the Park.

When asked, “What do you do in the Park?” many participants stated that they partake in a multitude of activities, but the majority go just for one purpose. The highest use was to visit the dog park (18%), though other activities, including walking (15%), visiting the garden (15%) and using the playground (11%) were not far behind. Sports use had a combination of over 18%, which can be broken out by 12% playing soccer and 6.6% playing softball or baseball.

In answering, “What do you like about the Park,” participants overwhelmingly identified the Park’s location. The athletic fields and dog area followed and many people who mentioned these two features also stated that they enjoy these activities because of the interaction they have with people and neighbors in the Park. Close to 25 people simply stated that they like the park because of the community. It is clear from these responses that Simpson has the feel of a neighborhood park while offering citywide amenities. People go to this park to see and be with other people, whether it is by interactions between

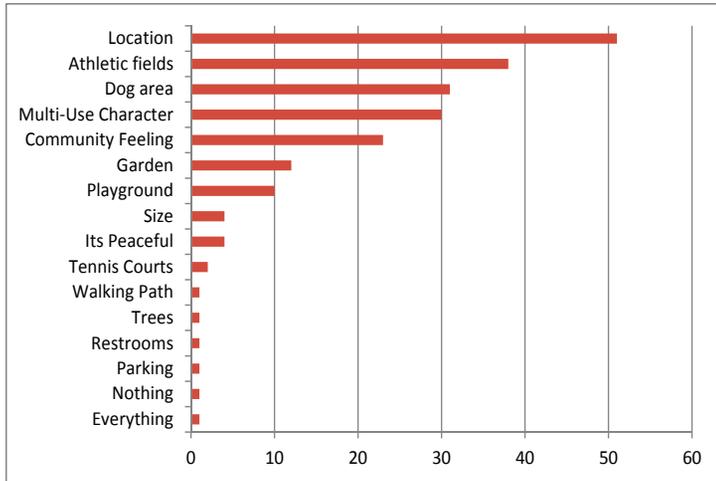
What needs improvement in Simpson Park?



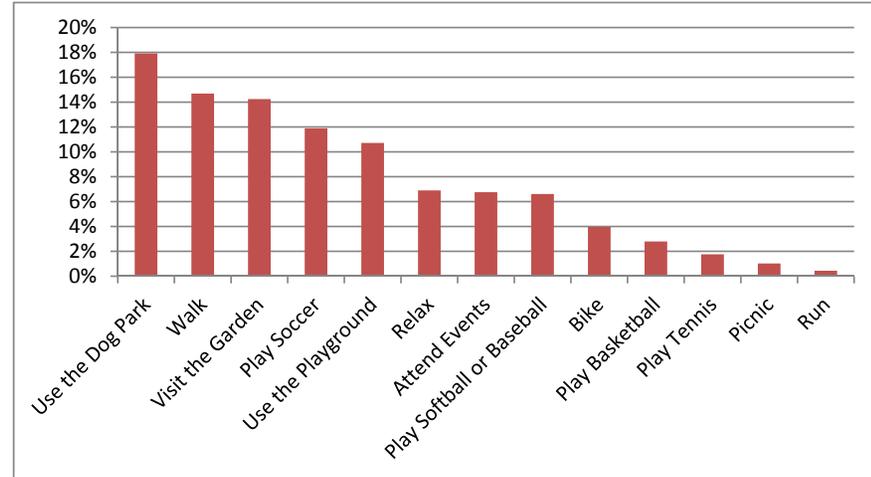
The highest priority is shown as the largest circle; the lowest priority is the smallest circle. Priorities are based on the number of responses to needed improvements and then weighted by how participants prioritized their answers

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What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



parents and kids in the playground or watching a baseball game. The one exception is the garden, which park users enjoy visiting for its serene setting. These type of park uses exemplify a vibrant urban park that weaves together, recreation, community, and nature in a compact open space.

There are some consistent themes throughout the three methods of community feedback. These include:

Parking

The survey and both workshops indicated that a parking management strategy is needed to determine how to control parking during heavy use of the soccer fields. From the users perspective, there needs to be easier access to the fields from parking spaces, yet from the neighborhood point of view, park users should be limited from parking on residential streets.

Access and Circulation

The community feedback clearly shows the need for improved pathways and entrances to the Park. Currently, park users enter where convenient, such as from Monroe Avenue, rather than where there are formalized paths. These informal entrances have become dangerous and caused erosion. Pathways that better connect park facilities and user patterns would create a more cohesive site.

Dog Park

The dog park is highly active, year-round and facilitates a strong community among dog owners. Many dog park users feel that the facility lacks amenities such as shade, lighting, new surfacing, and seating.

Playground

As shown in the survey results, the playground is a priority for Park improvements. As suggested, a playground renovation should include rubberized surface, areas for ages over five, and more shade. The design could also be better connected to passive use areas, making it family friendly for multiple age groups.

Passive Community Space

Simpson Park has many facilities to support organized activity for specific user groups. It lacks, however, a welcoming space to throw a frisbee, gather for a picnic, or let kids just “run around.” While the park is compact, better circulation could help carve out open areas for unorganized passive use. Additionally, the fields may be opened on occasion for monitored use without a permit.

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The Plan

KEYED LEGEND	
1.	WIDEN PATH 6-8 FEET TO ENABLE NORTH-SOUTH STANDARD PATHWAY
2.	ADJUST PLAYGROUND BORDERS, IMPROVE ENTRANCES, AND ADD NATURAL PLAY
3.	ADD STROLLER PARKING AND PLAZA AT PLAYGROUND ENTRANCE
4.	CREATE OPEN-USE AREA AND IMPROVE PLANTINGS IN PASSIVE USE AREAS
5.	CONNECT PATHWAY TO E. DUNCAN AVE
6.	USE BOLLARDS TO LIMIT PATHWAY DRIVING ACCESS TO MAINTENANCE VEHICLES
7.	PLANT PERIMETER TREES TO CREATE "GREEN ALLEY"
8.	PROVIDE NEW HARD TRAILS IN EAST HALF OF PARK
9.	PROVIDE NEW FIELD ENTRANCE AND RAMP
10.	IMPROVE MAINTENANCE ROUTE TO SOCCER FIELDS
11.	PROVIDE NEW BLEACHERS WITH EQUIPMENT STORAGE UNDERNEATH
12.	PROVIDE NEW BLEACHERS WITH CONCESSIONS BOOTHS UNDERNEATH
13.	CREATE PICNIC AREA NEAR CONCESSIONS
14.	EXPAND PARKING LOT
15.	ENCOURAGE USE OF FORTY FIVE TOTAL ON-STREET PARKING SPACES ALONG E MONROE AVE AND MAIN LINE BLVD FOR SOCCER FIELD USE
16.	IMPROVE DOG PARK TO INCLUDE LIGHTING, TERRACED HILL, TREES, AND PLAY FEATURES
17.	ADD MAINTENANCE STORAGE SHELTER AND YARD BETWEEN FIELDS
18.	ADD VEGETATED BIOSWALE ALONG DOG PARK EDGE AND AT MAINTENANCE YARD
19.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Note: CIP Funds have already been allocated to install stairs at Monroe Avenue/basketball court and to replace the Little Simpson Press Box in 2014.

GRAPHIC KEY

HARD TRAILS	PARK BOUNDS	OPEN USE AREAS	ENTRANCE PLAZAS	ATHLETIC FIELDS	DOG PARK
BIKE ROUTE					

DRAFT January 13, 2014

Recommendations & Implementation Strategy



The existing sidewalk between the YMCA parking lot and Duncan Avenue is very narrow, making it difficult for park users to pass each other, especially if there is a cyclist or stroller.



The playground in need of replacement and equipment to cater to multiple age groups.

1

Widen path 6-8 feet in width enabling a north-south standard pathway

Many Del Ray residents use this path to walk to neighborhood destinations, yet, the existing four foot path is constricted for simultaneous pedestrian, bicycle, and stroller use at its narrowest points. Widening this pathway would create an easier pedestrian route and meet the City's standard width for sidewalks.

ESTIMATED COST: \$87,500 - \$156,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

2

Adjust playground borders, improve entrances, add natural play

The proposed playground area will be moved slightly east to accommodate the widened path (recommendation #1). It will include a rubberized surface and new play equipment to serve multiple ages. Additional tree canopy will shade the area and new benches and trash receptacles will improve the space for parents and caregivers. The entire play area will increase with the addition of a seating wall and climbing features to the east of the playground.

ESTIMATED COST: \$325,000 - \$475,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 years

3

Add stroller parking and plaza at playground entrance

The proposed northwest entrance will provide convenient access to the playground from Duncan Avenue and serve as a welcoming gateway to the entire park. Parents or guardians with strollers will be able to park them in notches along the fence line bordering the proposed entrance.

ESTIMATED COST: \$19,000 - \$27,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

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The current passive use space that is unfenced is north of Big Simpson. Its grass surface is in poor condition.

4

Create open-use area and improve plantings in passive use areas

This plan proposes renovating open space to accommodate multiple passive uses and help to balance the type of activities in Simpson Park. With re-grading and improved landscape, the area will accommodate uses such as frisbee, picnics, and quiet relaxation. An entrance plaza including pervious brick pavers, benches, and trash receptacles will create a space for park visitors to congregate.

ESTIMATED COST: \$245,000 - \$368,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The park entrance at Duncan Avenue is simply an opening in a fence. It lacks any welcoming features and does not have a pathway to link to the rest of the Park. Often non-authorized vehicles enter the Park this way.

5

Connect pathway to East Duncan Avenue

If formalized, this pathway can integrate different park uses and serve as a pedestrian thoroughfare through the Park. Connecting the path to Duncan Avenue will allow easy access for pedestrians entering and leaving the Park from the neighborhood at its northern border.

6

Use bollards to limit pathway driving access to maintenance vehicles

Simpson becomes very busy during soccer and baseball games, and often cars drive along the park's pathways to drop off equipment or let out passengers. Bollards at each pathway's external access point will prevent non maintenance vehicles from moving through the site and keep the pathways safe for pedestrians and park users.

ESTIMATED COST (for both 5&6): \$28,000 - \$46,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The northside of Simpson Park is bordered by a visible alleyway and adjacent residences.

7

Plant perimeter trees to create "Green Alley"

Tree and shrub plantings along the northeast edge of the Park will create a green buffer between Simpson and the adjacent houses along East Duncan Avenue. Trees will be planted in a manner to maintain safe visibility into the Park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$65,000 - \$78,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

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The Northeast corner of the Park at Route One and East Bellefonte Avenue is in poor condition and not usable for recreation in its current state. However, if renovated, it could meet the need for unprogrammed passive use space in the park.

8

Provide new hard trails in east half of Park

These proposed trails will integrate the northern passive area (recommendation #4) with the rest of the Park and enhancing pedestrian circulation at Simpson. These paths will be particularly useful once the Potomac Yard development and Route One Bus Rapid Transit are complete and there is greater activity at this Park entrance.

ESTIMATED COST: \$51,000 - \$85,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years



The only field entrance from Monroe Avenue is on the southeast corner of the site.

9

Provide new field entrance and ramp

The existing fence opening and soccer field entrance at the corner of Monroe Avenue and Main Line Blvd. is insignificant as an entrance and does not include an ADA access. This ramp will be a wheelchair accessible entrance to the Park from East Monroe Avenue.

ESTIMATED COST: \$92,000 - \$113,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 1-3 Years

10

Improve maintenance route to soccer fields

The paved path will make it easier for park staff to access the soccer fields for maintenance work. The path will double as a surface for walking or other activities when it is not being used by park staff.

ESTIMATED COST: \$217,000 - \$275,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

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The existing equipment storage space, known as the “blue building,” is insufficient and in poor condition. It also takes up a lot of space in the Park that could be used for passive park uses.



The image above from Plymouth, WI shows an example of storage and concessions built into bleachers.



The Simpson Parking Lot is often congested and difficult to maneuver

11

Provide new bleachers with equipment storage underneath

The proposed new storage for Alexandria’s Little League, T.C. Williams baseball teams, and park maintenance equipment will be built into the bleachers in order to effectively economize space. This storage will replace the existing blue building, which can then be dismantled, making way for a plaza and picnic area (recommendation #13).

ESTIMATED COST: \$715,000 - \$875,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

12

Provide new bleachers with concessions booths underneath

The proposed built-in concession stand will be built into the bleachers without taking up additional Park space. Food purchased at concessions could be enjoyed at the proposed picnic plaza (recommendation #13).

ESTIMATED COST: \$780,000 - \$950,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

13

Create picnic plaza near concessions

People frequently use the one existing picnic table near the basketball court. It is a comfortable location for sitting and watching surrounding activity at the basketball court and baseball fields, and serves as a congregation space. The proposed picnic area, including a hardscape surface and new tables will expand this use.

ESTIMATED COST: \$226,000 - \$311,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

14

Expand parking lot

The new loop will mitigate vehicular congestion in the Park by allowing visitors to park or drop of passengers for sports practice and events without having to do a three point turn to exit the parking lot.

ESTIMATED COST: \$60,000 - \$77,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

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With the completion of Main Line Boulevard there will be additional on-street parking available for high peak sports use of Simpson Park. This will be particularly convenient for those entering the soccer fields at the gate on the Southeast corner of the Park.



The Dog Park is used year-round at all times of day, yet without lights it feels unsafe, particularly during winter months. The hill is also full of debris and is eroding. There are also drainage issues in the area after poor weather.

15

Encourage use of forty five total on-street parking spaces along E. Monroe Avenue and Main Line Boulevard for soccer field use

Recreation staff will work with team coaches to ensure that soccer players and spectators are parking along Monroe Ave. and Main Line Blvd., leaving the parking lot near the YMCA open for baseball groups. Assigning sports groups to designated parking spaces during Simpson Park’s peak use times will help limit congestion and make it easier for sports groups to find available spaces. Those parking along Monroe Ave. and Main Line Blvd. can access the park using the proposed ADA accessible ramp or stairs on either side of the dog park. RPCA will also work to adjust game scheduling in order to prevent programming Simpson past its parking capacity.

ESTIMATED COST: N/A

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: N/A

16

Improve Dog Park to include lighting, terraced hill, trees, and play features

Simpson Park’s dog park is one of the most popular in the City and is used day and night throughout the year, despite dark hours or weather conditions. The dog park improvements, will create a safer and more pleasant environment for owners and their dogs.

ESTIMATED COST: \$52,000 - \$75,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

17

Add maintenance storage shelter and yard between fields

The maintenance shelter and yard will help Simpson’s Park staff in their work to keep the park a clean, safe, and welcoming environment. The new shelter and yard will protect field maintenance equipment from unnecessary wear and tear.

ESTIMATED COST: \$53,000 - \$73,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

18

Add vegetated bioswale along dog park edge and at maintenance yard

Stormwater management is a recurring issue at different parts of the Park. These proposed vegetated bioswales will help retained water percolate faster into the ground and enhance natural resources at Simpson.

ESTIMATED COST: \$178,000 - \$223,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

19

Archaeological Evaluation

The completion of the Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation will allow for an understanding of the history of the site and the locations of significant resources (including the presence of an alms house). These are needed for current and future interpretive, planning and management decisions and can guide the potential placement of interpretive markers to educate residents about the area’s history and enrich the visitor experience by providing a connection to the past.

ESTIMATED COST: TBD

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

Overall Preliminary Cost Estimates

The estimated cost range (in 2013 dollars) shown on the right includes two scenarios: 1) If the recommendations were implemented independent of other projects and include associated soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental, permitting) and 2) a cost scenario in which all the recommendations are implemented together.

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WAYFINDING	\$11,178	-	\$14,285	\$13,414	-	\$17,142	high
01 WIDEN PATHWAY	63,038	-	112,167	\$87,623	-	\$155,913	medium
02 PLAYGROUND RENOVATION	171,181	-	245,718	\$237,942	-	\$341,548	high
02 NATURAL PLAY FEATURES	62,150	-	95,658	\$86,388	-	\$132,965	high
03 STROLLER PARK & PLAYGROUND PLAZA ENTRANCE	13,809	-	19,171	\$19,194	-	\$26,647	medium
04 - PASSIVE PLAY AREA	66,644	-	114,626	\$92,635	-	\$159,331	high
04 PASSIVE OPEN SPACE	180,027	-	250,860	\$250,237	-	\$348,695	high
05 & 06 DUNCAN AVENUE ENTRANCE	20,270	-	33,290	\$28,176	-	\$46,272	high
07 ALLEYWAY LANDSCAPE BUFFER	53,877	-	65,077	\$64,652	-	\$78,093	medium
08 TRAIL TO ROUTE 1	36,631	-	61,593	\$50,917	-	\$85,614	high
09 MONROE AVENUE ADA ACCESS	66,407	-	81,084	\$92,305	-	\$112,706	high
10 MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS	156,262	-	197,793	\$217,204	-	\$274,932	medium
11 BLEACHERS & STORAGE	516,735	-	631,250	\$718,262	-	\$877,438	high
12 BLEACHERS & CONCESSIONS	561,398	-	685,391	\$780,344	-	\$952,693	medium
13 REMOVE BLUE BUILDING & CONTAINER	162,624	-	223,967	\$226,048	-	\$311,314	high
14 PARKING LOT TURN AROUND	42,810	-	55,256	\$59,506	-	\$76,806	high
16 DOG PARK BERM STABILIZATION	10,506	-	13,883	\$14,603	-	\$19,297	high
16 DOG PARK LIGHTING	27,840	-	40,565	\$38,698	-	\$56,385	high
18 DOG PARK BIO-FILTERS	127,992	-	159,648	\$177,909	-	\$221,911	medium
17 MAINTENANCE STORAGE SHELTER	38,355	-	52,663	\$53,313	-	\$73,201	high
IMPERVIOUS SURFACE BMP REQUIREMENTS	100,000	-	100,000	\$100,000	-	\$100,000	
UTILITY UPGRADES	110,000	-	137,500	\$152,900	-	\$191,125	high
SUBTOTAL	\$2,705,662	-	\$3,544,536				
	Soft Costs						
	CONTINGENCY	541,132.46	-	708,907.16			
	ENGINEERING	324,679.47	-	425,344.30			
	SURVEY	81,169.87	-	106,336.07			
	GEOTECHNICAL	54,113.25	-	70,890.72			
	ENVIRONMENTAL	54,113.25	-	70,890.72			
	PERMITTING	150,000.00	-	200,000.00			
GRAND TOTAL	\$3,910,871	-	\$5,126,905				

DRAFT, January 13, 2014

Overall Preliminary Cost Estimates for all Six Parks

Each of the Park Improvement Plans within this document provide specific line item cost estimates under the assumption that various recommendations will be funded independent of others and at different times.

However, if the City were to fund and implement all of the plans and recommendations at once, the table on the right shows the overall cost. These estimates include all soft costs (contingency, engineering, survey, geotechnical, environmental, and permitting).

Citywide Park Improvement Plan Cost Estimate Summary

	Estimated Cost Range		
Citywide Projects	\$705,000	-	\$1,040,000
Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks	\$6,174,560	-	\$6,756,593
Chinquapin Park	\$6,850,990	-	\$8,869,846
Four Mile Run Park	\$6,435,046	-	\$7,890,234
Hensley Park	\$4,634,229	-	\$6,113,532
Holmes Run Park System	\$2,506,358	-	\$3,661,677
Simpson Stadium Park	\$3,910,871	-	\$5,126,905
TOTAL (includes all soft costs)	\$31,217,054	-	\$39,458,786

DRAFT, January 13, 2014

Note: Alternative Field House at Hensley Park is not included in grand total shown above. If pursued, the total cost estimate would range from \$38,500,000 to \$50,000,000