City of Alexandria, Virginia

Pocket Park Improvement Plans

Final Draft Plan

January 16, 2020

Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Activities
Park Planning, Capital Development & Waterfront Division
Park typology planning goal supporting Department Strategic Plan

Ensure a citywide open space system that equitably brings together our vibrant and diverse community and invests in the environment, while managing our resources responsibly.

1. Citywide Park Plans (10-50 acres) – plan completed in 2013 to be updated 2021-2023

2. Neighborhood Park Plans (0.5 – 1- acres) – plan completed in 2016

3. Pocket Park Plans (0.5 and under) – expected completion 2020
25 Pocket Parks
### Pocket Park Planning Process

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<th>Step</th>
<th>Spring 2018</th>
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Goals for all Pocket Parks

1. Wayfinding
2. Meeting needs while being flexible with small spaces
3. Incorporating nature
4. Creating social connections
Portner Park
Draft Improvement Plan

Portner Park: 513 N Washington Street
Improvement Recommendations

1. **Add a park welcome sign**
   Add a park welcome sign to meet the City’s wayfinding standards and invite park users into the park and to help create more place making in this park.

2. **Install game tables and seating**
   Community feedback indicated a desire for a community gathering spot. Installing game tables, similar to the tables at 2550 Commonwealth Avenue Park, would provide an opportunity to create social connections for both older children and adults.

3. **Add natural play features**
   Community feedback indicated a desire for play features for children in this park. Installing natural play features, such as boulders, logs, and stepping stones, will provide play opportunities throughout the park.

4. **Seek partner agreements with neighbors on park plantings**
   The park is for public use. Many private properties have planted within the park boundary. An agreement would ensure the plants are appropriate variety and non-invasive.

5. **Explore an additional park entrance**
   Community feedback indicated that the single entrance to the park limits access and makes visiting the park challenging. Explore adding an additional park entrance using an existing easement or through acquiring an additional easement to help make the park accessible to more neighbors.
Portner Park
Final Improvement Plan

Portner Park: 1427 Powhatan Street
Improvement Recommendations

1. Add a park sign: Add a park sign to meet the City’s wayfinding standards, identify entrances into the park, help create more place-making, and display the rules and regulations of the park.

2. Revise trash collection location: Community feedback indicated a desire to move the trash collection location from the northern end of the park. Review the area with the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services to determine if there is a better location for trash collection.

3. Revise drainage issues: Community feedback indicated that there were drainage issues in the park. Evaluate drainage improvement options through an engineering and design process.

4. Update storm drains: Evaluate and update the existing storm drains in coordination with the Division of Stormwater Management and design improvements.

5. Replace wooden retaining walls: Replace the existing wooden retaining walls along the park boundaries in good and failing condition with an additional park entrance.

6. If redvelopment of the adjacent land occurs, revisit the potential of an access entrance into the park to help make the park accessible to more neighbors.

7. Add natural play features: Community feedback indicated a desire for play features for children in this park. Install natural play features to provide play opportunities throughout the park.

8. Develop a planting and maintenance plan: Conduct a study and review park for native plants with the City arborist. Develop a planting and maintenance plan identifying and preserving native plants and adding new, site-appropriate plants that are well adapted to sunny settings. Explore the possibility of a walking path throughout the park.

9. Seek partner agreement with neighbors on park plantings. The park is for public use. Many private properties have planted within the park boundary. An agreement ensures the plants are appropriate and non-invasive.

10. Add a dog waste station: Establish a partnership agreement with the Division of Stormwater Management and community association and install a dog waste station.

11. Replace a missing fence: The fence on the southern end of the park is in disrepair and non-compliant. Replace the fence with a city standard fence.

12. Name the park: Name the park as guided by the City’s Naming Policy to give the park more of an identity.

13. Conduct a safety study: Conduct an informal pedestrian safety analysis through Environmental Design (OPED) study to address community safety concerns. Incorporate recommendations from study.
Lynhaven Park
Draft Improvement Plan

Lynhaven Park: 5 East Reed Avenue
Improvement Recommendations

1. Plant trees around the park
   - Planting trees in the grass area outside of the fence along Reed Avenue and the alley will provide shade inside the playground without taking space from the playground area.

2. Add a park welcome sign
   - Add a park welcome sign to meet the City's wayfinding standards and invite park users into the park.

3. Install a stroller parking area
   - Convert the flat hardscape area near the entrance to the park along Wilson Avenue and designate as stroller parking area.

4. Update existing playground and provide equipment for multiple age groups
   - The current playground is outdated standard playground equipment, mainly focused on ages 5-12. Community feedback indicated that there is a need for additional structures that interest multiple ages and promote more imaginative play.

5. Create shaded seating areas
   - Community feedback indicated a need for gathering space for parents to relax and socialize while their children play. This can include shade structures and tables.

6. Convert an area of mulch away from the play features to blacktop
   - Community feedback indicated a need for variation in ground surface in the park that could be used for various activities, especially for older children. A blacktop surface could provide multiple uses. One potential use of this blacktop surface is a traffic garden, a painted miniature roadway with markings that demonstrate various roadway scenarios.

Park Boundary

E REED AVE
WILSON AVE

DRAFT

Scale: 0 15 30 60 Feet

N
Lynhaven Park: 5 East Reed Avenue
Improvement Recommendations

1. Plant trees around the park.
   - Plant trees in the grass area east side of the fence, along Reed Avenue and the alley to provide shade inside the playground without taking space from the playground area.
   - Add a park welcome sign.
   - Add a park entrance sign to meet the City's wayfinding standards and invite visitors into the park.

2. Install a toddler parking area.
   - Convert the flat, hardtop area near the entrance to the parking lot as a separate parking area.
   - Update existing playground equipment and provide equipment for multiple age groups.

3. Add a central gathering area.
   - The current playground is a standard playground without facilities for ages 1-12. Community feedback indicated that there is a need for additional structures that interest multiple age groups and promote more imaginative play, including playgrounds, outdoor dancing, and a slide structure over the playground during the playground renovation.

4. Improve the seating area.
   - Create shaded seating areas.
   - Community feedback indicated a need for gathering space for parents to relax and socialize while their children play. This can include shade structures and tables.

5. Connect an area of much away from the play features to ballet.
   - Community feedback indicated a need for a basketball court.

6. Convert the flat, hardtop area to a skateboard area.
   - Hardtop surface in the park that could be used for various activities, especially for older children. A basketball court could provide multiple uses. A basketball court area could be transformed into a skateboarding area.

7. Create a playground-based setting area.
   - Community feedback indicated a need for a setting outside the formal playground. This playground space could serve as a welcoming point for use as the park.

8. Reconfigure the fence.
   - Realign the parking to allow for a more suitable setting area and include an access maintenance entrance and bike storage into the park along Reed Avenue.

9. Add People to School.
   - Add Wilson Avenue and East Reed Avenue crossings to Safe Routes to Schools to improve area connectivity.
   - Renovate frontage of E Reed Avenue and Wilson Avenue and direct pedestrians and bikers into the crosswalk.
Lake Cook Pocket Park
Draft Improvement Plan

Lake Cook Pocket Park: 3911 Eisenhower Ave
Improvement Recommendations

1. Install nature-inspired play features
   Community feedback indicated a desire for additional opportunities for children to play in the park. Install a playground with nature-inspired features for children of all ages. Locate the playground outside of the resource protection area.

2. Install a bat house
   Community feedback indicated a desire to enhance nature throughout the park, and to control insects naturally. Bats are an important part of the ecosystem, they eat mosquitoes and other insects and act as pollinators. Install a bat house to attract bats to the park. Work with the Natural Resources Division to ensure the bat house is installed in an appropriate location.

3. Invasive species management
   The Natural Resources Division will manage invasive species in the park as part of its operating program.

4. Plant native trees in wooded areas
   By planting sapling native trees in the wooded areas around the park, these will over time, replace trees that decline naturally. Also, evaluate the plantings around the lake and throughout the park and supplement as needed.

5. Add seating and shade structures
   Community feedback indicated a need for shaded seating and gathering spaces. Install picnic table seating and shade structures that could be used as a gathering area for caregivers, multi-generational gatherings, and community gatherings.

6. Plant trees to serve as barriers
   Vehicles park along the side of the access road, killing the small plants and creating muddy conditions. Instead of driving into the park and parking in the provided parking lot, trees will serve as a natural barrier along the access road and guide park visitors to the parking lot.

Install Bike Share Station
Transportation & Environmental Services is considering installing a Bike Share station near the Cameron Run bike trail. This station would provide a needed connection point if the bike share network along the busy Cameron Run bike trail. The selected location will need to allow a vehicle to access the station to “unload” bikes between stations.

Improve park access from Eisenhower Avenue
Provide safe and accessible pedestrian and bike crossings into the park. This may include additional crosswalks, updating existing crosswalks to high visibility, an improved intersection, and shortened crossing distance through installation of refuge islands or realigning the crosswalks. A transportation analysis will be coordinated by Transportation and Environmental Services.

Mark the loop trail with a ½ mile sign
The new loop trail around the lake is ½ mile long. Mark the trail to indicate the length.

Evaluate park needs based on usage since restoration
The area around the lake was extensively renovated in 2018 as part of a stormwater retrofit project. Evaluate use and park needs since the renovation, paying particular attention to school groups, fishing patterns, and neighborhood use.

Explore partnerships with NOVA Parks for bathroom access
Community feedback indicated a desire for bathrooms of gender-neutral to be installed in the park. Explore partnerships and signage with NOVA Parks to provide a bathroom for park users at Cameron Run Regional Park.
Lake Cook Pocket Park
Final Improvement Plan

Lake Cook Pocket Park: 3911 Eisenhower Ave

Improvement Recommendations

1. Install nature inspired play features
   Community feedback indicated a desire for additional opportunities for children to play in the park. Install a playground with nature inspired features for children of all ages. Locate the playspace outside of the Fauquier Resource Protection Area.

2. Install a bat house
   Community feedback indicated a desire to enhance nature throughout the park and to control insects naturally. Bats are an important part of the ecosystem, they eat mosquitoes and other insects, and act as pollinators. Install a bat house to attract bats to the park and add education signage. Work with the Natural Resources Division to ensure the bat house is installed in an appropriate location.

3. Plant native trees in wooded areas
   Plant sapling native trees in the wooded areas around the park, which will over time, replace trees that decline naturally. Evaluate the plantings around the lake and throughout the park and supplement as needed.

4. Add seating and shade structures
   Community feedback indicated a need for shaded seating and gathering spaces. Install picnic table seating and shade structures that could be used in a gathering area for caregivers, multi-generational gatherings, and community gatherings.

5. Plant trees to serve as barrier
   Vehicles park along the side of the access road, killing the small plants and creating muddy conditions. Instead of driving into the park and parking in the provided parking lot, plant trees to serve as a natural barrier along the access road and guide park visitors to the parking lot.

6. Evaluate park program needs based on use since renovation
   The area around the lake was extensively renovated in 2018 as part of a stormwater retrofit project. Evaluate use and park needs since the renovation, paying attention to school groups, fishing patterns, and neighborhood use.

7. Mark the loop trail with a ½ mile sign
   The new loop trail around the lake is ½ mile long. Mark the trail to indicate the length.

8. Install Bike Share Station and bike parking
   Transportation & Environmental Services is installing a BikeShare station between Lake Cook and Cameron Run Regional Park. This station provides a needed connection point in the bike share network along the Eisenhower Avenue trail. Install bike parking to encourage bike use to the park.

9. Improve park access from Eisenhower Avenue
   Provide safe and accessible pedestrian and bike crossings into the park. This may include additional crosswalks, updating existing crosswalks to high visibility, an improved intersection, and shortened crossing distances through installation of refuge islands or realigning the crosswalks. Transportation & Environmental Services to coordinate a transportation analysis.

10. Add water access
    Add water access for both a drinking (and bottle filler) and hand washing.

11. Add a rules and regulations sign
    Add a rules and regulations sign to inform park users of the park’s rules.

12. Invasive species management
    The Natural Resources Division to continue to manage invasive species in the park as part of its operating program.
Sunset Mini Park: 4 Sunset Drive
Improvement Recommendations

1. **Move fence to designate use areas**
   - The fence is currently around the entire park, and community feedback indicated that many people are not aware this is a park. Moving the fence so that it is only around the playground opens up the rest of the park to passers-by and creates a more inviting space for all ages.

2. **Renovate the playground**
   - The playground equipment is limited in this park and does not adequately use the available space. The current playground was renovated in 2007. When appropriate to renovate the full playground, consider a train theme given the proximity to train tracks that serve Amtrak and WMATA trains.

3. **Add a park welcome sign**
   - Add a park welcome sign to meet the City’s wayfinding standards and invite park users into the park and to help create more place making in this park.

4. **Improve access from King Street**
   - Improve pedestrian crossing to the park across Sunset Drive to provide safe and accessible access from King Street. This may include updating the existing crosswalk to high visibility and updating the ADA access ramps at the intersection of Sunset Drive and King Street.

5. **Consider public art**
   - Work with the Office of the Arts to appropriately integrate public art into the design process for this park.

6. **Transportation and Environmental Services**
   - Consider improvements to the design of the King Street, Callahan Drive, and Russell Road Intersection.

**Diagram Description**
- **Bench**
- **Playground**
- **Trash Can**
- **Fence**

**Map**
- **Park Boundary**
- **Street Layout**
- **Scale**
- **Legend**

**Note:** This is a draft improvement plan and may be subject to changes based on community input and available resources.
Sunset Mini Park: 4 Sunset Drive

Improvement Recommendations

1. Move fences to designate use areas
   - The fence is currently around the entire park, and community feedback indicated that many people are not aware this is a park. Move the fence back to allow access to the benches without entering the playground. This opens up the rest of the park to pedestrians and creates a more inviting space for all ages.

2. Roadside the playground
   - The playground equipment is limited in this park and does not adequately use the available space. The current playground was enlarged in 2007. When appropriate, replace the full playground and consider a layout that gives the proximity to trailheads that serve America Walk/WAYA trails.

3. Add outdoor seating area
   - This park could be improved by the City from the WAYS/WAYA stations and be a good place for families and visitors who use the trail to picnic and play. Add picnic benches or Adirondack chairs in the grass area near the cherry trees to create a social area.

4. Add a park entrance sign
   - Add a park entrance sign to meet the City's wayfinding standards and invite park users into the park and to help create a more place-making in this park.

5. Improve park access from King Street
   - Improve pedestrian crossing to the park access. Sunset Drive provides safe and accessible access from King Street. This may include updating the existing crosswalk to high visibility or updating the ADA access ramp at the intersection of Sunset Drive and King Street.

6. Consider public art
   - Work with the Office of the Arts to appropriately integrate public art into the design process for this park.

7. The Transportation & Environmental Services Division is considering improvements to the design of the King Street, Callahan Drive, and Sunset Road intersection.
Update park signage
The existing park welcome sign will be updated to the current standard.

Add additional seating
Install picnic table seating that could be used as a gathering area for caregivers and for multi-generational gatherings. Also install multi-tiered seating near the playground that can be used as a gathering area for caregivers and allows them to see children throughout the playground.

Renovate and reconfigure the playground
The existing playground is outdated and does not meet community needs. It can be difficult for caregivers to see children throughout the playground due to the location of the equipment. The play equipment will be updated with new structures for multiple age groups.

Add a gate to the alley
Community feedback indicated that families along Dogwood Drive would like to access the park through the alley. Along with a gate, additional signage in the alley would need to be installed warning drivers that children are present.

Add paint/thermoplastic to the alley
To add additional color and visibility to the alley near the playground, install a thermoplastic or painted design in the alley along the length of the playground. This acts as a safety feature to help cars slow down and adds color and vibrancy to the park.
In 2019, the Make-A-Wish Foundation approached the City of Alexandria with a wish from a local four year old. Whitaker has bravely battled cancer and is currently waiting for his wish. Whitaker absolutely loves going to the Woodbine Tot Lot across the street from his house and has asked to renovate the playground and add some special items to make the tot lot extra special for himself and all his neighborhood friends.

The Make-A-Wish project will renovate Woodbine Tot Lot, per the Whitaker’s wishes. Make-A-Wish will hire a designer to work with the community and a contractor to renovate the playground, with RPCA oversight. The playground design will take into consideration the draft Pocket Park Plan.

Through the Community Matching Fund, the City of Alexandria, is offering a $25,000 grant and Make-A-Wish is matching these funds.
Woodbine Tot Lot
Final Improvement Plan

Woodbine Tot Lot: 1509 Woodbine Street
Improvement Recommendations

1. **Update signage**
   - Update the existing park welcome sign to the current city standard.

2. **Add additional seating**
   - Install picnic table seating to be used as a gathering area for caregivers and for multi-generational gatherings. Install multi-stacked benches near the playground to be used as a gathering area for caregivers and allow them to see children throughout the playground.

3. **Renovate and reconfigure the playground**
   - The existing playground is outdated and does not meet the community’s needs. Update the playground equipment with new structures for multi-generation groups. Community feedback indicated a need for shade in the park. Install shade structures, such as shade sail, as part of the playground renovation. Renovate the park’s entrance to a more welcoming face to make it easier for caretakers with strollers to get in and out of the park.

4. **Add a gate to the alley and reconfigure fence**
   - Community feedback indicated that families along Bingwood Drive would like to access the park through the alley. Replace the fence with a city standard green fence and reconfigure it to allow a buffer zone between the alley and the park for caregivers, children, and strollers. Along with a gate, additional signage in the alley will need to be installed warning drivers that children are present.

5. **Add paint/thermoplastic to the alley**
   - Install the multipurpose painted design in the alley along the length of the playground to add additional color and visibility. This acts as a safety feature for children to slow down and adds color and vibrancy to the park.
Next Steps

1. Receive cost estimates and prioritize recommendations

2. Receive endorsement or changes from Park and Recreation Commission based on public hearing

3. Staff will make changes to the plan as advised by the PRC

4. Integrate recommendations into CIP process and seek alternative funding sources