



# 50 & FORWARD

VAN DYCK PARK MASTER PLAN



DRAFT - OCTOBER 2017 | WORKING DOCUMENT



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Introduction

## Plan Purpose

This document is the descriptive component of the Master Plan for Van Dyck Park, providing the planning context, process, and approach. It addresses existing site information and analysis, as well as opportunities and issues that guided the decisions for drafting the final plan. Upon approval, this plan will serve to guide future planning and design projects for Van Dyck Park facilities and grounds.



Figure 1. 50 & Forward master planning public outreach

## What is a Master Plan?

The master plan for Van Dyck Park will provide the City with a road map for incorporating and implementing necessary infrastructure improvements while allowing the City to better accommodate the current and future use of the park by the general public. The Master Plan will strengthen the role of the park as a community asset, serving as the communal living room and backyard for the residents of the City of Fairfax.

Surprisingly, much of the park is unknown by members of the community. The park's frontage is visible from Old Lee Highway, most know of the playground and the skate park. But the other park assets, its woods and trails, the stream valley, tennis courts and open play area are not as well known. New and expanded pedestrian and vehicular entrances will make these resources more visible to the community at large through the preservation and expansion of vistas into the park.

There are no plans to radically change the park or its current uses. The sledding hills remain and the recently designated Armistice Turtora Bowl remains untouched. The woods at the base of the park near University Drive are protected and managed. Improvements are recommended to address aging infrastructure such as the lack of permanent restrooms and aging physical fitness and playground equipment. The skate park is at the end of its useful lifecycle.

### *Project Intent*

- Recognize that open space is at a premium in the City of Fairfax
- Reinforce that Van Dyck Park is the City's crown jewel of an open space
- Integrate uses with a clear concept that engages the audience and creates buy-in by residents of the City of Fairfax
- Provide multi-generational areas for play and recreation
- Employ an active and engaging public outreach
- The Master Plan is developed with park maintenance and operations in mind

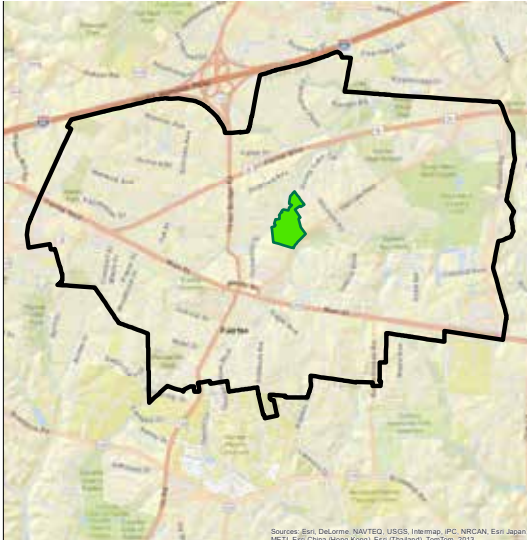


Figure 2. Context map



Figure 3. Parcel map



Figure 4. View into “The Armistice Turtora Bowl”

## Project Description

Van Dyck Park, located at 3720 Old Lee Highway, is considered to be the crown jewel in Fairfax City, Virginia, as it is one of its most frequently visited community parks. Van Dyck Park is the premier park in the City; it is the City’s backyard.

The City celebrates the park’s 50th birthday in 2017, which spurred this master planning effort. The park was named after E. Calvin Van Dyck, a representative of the Town of Fairfax who in 1959 championed the independence of the municipality from Fairfax County.

The park’s combined three parcels<sup>1</sup> totaling approximately 36 acres<sup>2</sup> include wooded natural areas and stream corridor, athletic fields, grassy open spaces with varied topography, trails, picnic areas and picnic shelters, skate park, parking, and a community center and police station.

A land trade in 1968 between the City of Fairfax and St. Leo’s changed the park’s configuration and provided space for the expansion of St. Leo’s school. A 2.69 acre parcel abutting Old Lee Highway that was owned by the City was exchanged for a 4.76 acre parcel owned by St. Leo’s. The larger parcel now forms the northwestern, wooded corner of the park just adjacent to Cornwall Road and provided access to the park from Country Club Hills and Lord Fairfax Estates.

Centrally located in the City, the community embraces the park’s grassy open areas, particularly the designated “Armistice Turtora Bowl,” where unprogrammed multi-generational activities are common. With open space at a premium, such versatility to accommodate multiple recreational activities is key to the success of this community park. The master plan recognizes this priority and builds on the efforts and guiding strategies for the park identified in *The City of Fairfax Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, Events and Cultural Arts* (June 2014).

- 1 Parcel ID#57-2-02-175, Parcel ID#57-2-02-175A, Parcel ID#57-2-02-176
- 2 In 1968, the westernmost parcel—ID #57-2-02-16—was reconfigured in a land exchange with neighboring St. Leo’s Catholic Church



Figure 5. Interpretive sign honoring Armistice Turtora

While the “bones” of the 1967 plan designed by resident landscape architect, Don Lederer, are still intact and loved, the City has grown significantly and recognizes that park facilities and grounds are outdated and in need of substantial maintenance, repair, and improvement. The drawing below indicates Mr. Lederer’s original intent for the park, and the blue arrows indicate the two parcels subject to the land trade.

**1967**

- Master Plan

**1968**

- Land Exchange with St. Leo’s



Figure 6. 1967 Plan by Landscape Architect Don Lederer; blue arrow indicates parcels involved in 1968 land exchange



Figure 7. LeisureTimes photo cover with 1970's era park photos

## COMMUNITY PARK Definition<sup>1</sup>

*Van Dyck Park is considered to be a 'Community Park'*

- Typical Size - 10-50+ Acres
- Service Area - 1 - 2-mile service radius (5 minute drive) to server several neighborhoods with populations up to 20,000+
- Typical facilities include all those listed for Neighborhood Parks (field games, court games, playgrounds, small pools), plus major swimming pool, field or court game complex, major recreation or community center, etc.
- May be an area of natural quality for picnicking, walking, etc.
- Desirable Characteristics - Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities; or, provides one or two activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas. Park should ideally be located at or near a school.
- May meet needs of neighborhood park for users within a 1-mile radius.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix C of Strategic Plan

## Related Studies & Plans

### *City of Fairfax Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, Events and Cultural Arts (June 2014)*

Public engagement and surveys completed as part of the City's 2014 Strategic Master Plan reinforce the demand for improvements at Van Dyck Park. The Strategic Master Plan lays the framework for this master planning effort, with the purpose of providing the City "with a "road map" as to how best incorporate and implement necessary infrastructure improvements and to allow the City accommodate better the current and future use by the public at the park." The Action Plan strategies (sidebar) are excerpts from the Strategic Master Plan. The "Master Plan" section of this document further elaborates on how these strategies are addressed.

Current demographic studies indicate that the population of Fairfax City will continue to trend toward increased ethnic diversity with age demographics shifting much like the rest of Northern Virginia and the US population as a whole. The City continues to be an attractive place to live, drawing young families and students, while maintaining a large population of seniors.<sup>1</sup> Focal priorities outlined in the Strategic Master Plan, based on public outreach include:

- Meeting the City's evolving programmatic needs with shifting age demographics
- Replacement of aging equipment, including the skate park
- Addition of park restroom facilities
- Improve parking access and traffic patterns, as there are multiple traffic generating facilities located on Old Lee Highway, including the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, Historic Blenheim, the Police Station, and neighboring schools and churches
- Engineering studies and sustainable maintenance practices to address the severe erosion of Accotink Creek, which has an effect on park facilities
- Volunteer initiatives to assist with trail maintenance, removal of invasive species, and inventory of natural and cultural resources for use in educational and demonstration programs

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A – Planning Context. City of Fairfax Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, Events and Cultural Arts (June 2014)

### *Who goes to Van Dyck Park?*

- Families with children
- Teens
- Seniors
- Faith based groups
- Dog walkers
- Skaters
- BMX bikers
- Nature enthusiasts

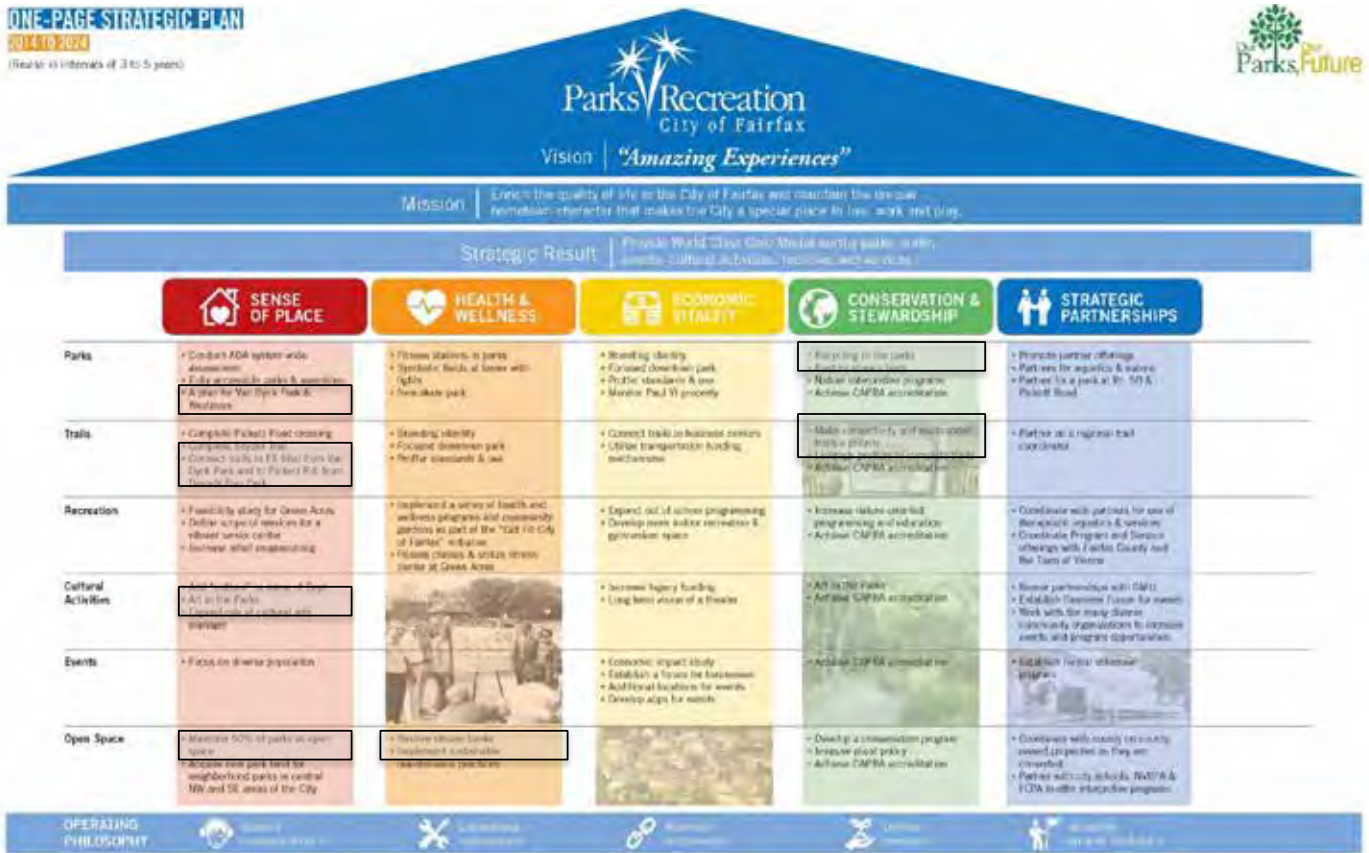


Figure 8. One-page Summary of the 2014 Strategic Plan

## City of Fairfax Strategic Master Plan

### Action Plan Strategies Excerpts as Related to Van Dyck Park<sup>1</sup>

**Strategy 1.1.3:** Update the 1967 Master Plan for Van Dyck Park

**Strategy 1.1.7:** Establish three playgrounds in strategic geographical locations to sever as larger barrier-free and sensory rich environments.

**Strategy 1.1.8:** Restore eroded stream banks at Van Dyck

**Strategy 1.2.3:** Ensure that at least 40% of parks designated as “Community Park” land remains undeveloped and is maintained as open space and buffer to maintain a balance of active and passive areas at each designated “Community Park.” Trails could be located in the undeveloped portion.

**Strategy 1.2.8:** Coordinate with Fairfax County when and if the County plans to redevelop or move the Belle Willard and Joseph Willard buildings, as a means to enhance and expand Van Dyck Park and the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center

**Strategy 1.4.2:** Develop restroom solutions at parks with the highest use levels

**Strategy 1.4.3:** Replace the skate park at Van Dyck Park.

**Strategy 1.5.1:** Repair/improve existing trails & develop new trails. Connect to Fairfax Blvd.

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, Events and Cultural Arts, City of Fairfax, Virginia. 2014



Figure 9. Accotink Stream at Van Dyck Park

### ***Accotink Creek Stream Stability Assessment and Prioritization Plan Supplemental Report for Daniels Run (October 2008)***

The City of Fairfax is located within the Accotink Creek Watershed. Accotink Creek, a portion of the “southern reach” tributary, flows in a northeast direction along the entire northern edge of Van Dyck Park. RK&K, a consulting engineering firm, conducted a stream assessment of the Accotink Creek stream system within the City of Fairfax in the spring of 2007 to capture the scale and extent of stream bank erosion in the watershed and to develop a priority plan for future restoration efforts<sup>2</sup>.

The City of Fairfax has been involved with stream restoration since the mid-1990s. Stream reaches on either side of the Accotink Creek segment that borders the north side of the park have been previously restored.

RK&K’s 2008 report recommends that the Lower Jean Street segment, abutting the north end of Van Dyck Park, be considered high priority for restoration. Overall poor stream health for this portion of the creek indicates that immediate action is needed to address bank erosion, tree loss, flooding, and stream debris.

### ***Old Lee Highway Multi-modal Improvements, 2017***

A current study undertaken by the City with Rinker Design Associates is examining the Old Lee Highway corridor and its potential cross-section. Past studies, including the Great Streets study, have made a variety of improvement recommendations. Although incomplete at the time of this plan effort, coordination through City staff has been undertaken and the park master planning effort is incorporating an appropriate setback from the center line of the road’s current geometric configuration so that any road improvements will not adversely affect the park, or vice versa.

<sup>2</sup> Accotink Creek Stream Stability Assessment and Prioritization Plan Supplemental Report for Daniels Run, City of Fairfax, Virginia October 14, 2008, Rummel, Klepper & Kahl, LLP

### Community Center Study, 2017

Concurrently with the master planning effort, City Council directed staff to examine three sites within the City boundaries to build a community center to replace the Green Acres facility. Project size is anticipated to include a 30,000 to 40,000 square foot building and associated parking. Three sites were examined, including Van Dyck Park. The two other sites under exploration were the City Hall site and Providence Park. Volkert performed the work as a consultant to the City of Fairfax.

One of the outcomes of this exploration was the opportunity for the City of Fairfax to look at co-locating this facility in conjunction with Fairfax County’s interest in replacing the Willard Center at the intersection of Old Lee Highway and Layton Hall Drive. This approach could benefit Van Dyck Park by providing a public vehicular and pedestrian access to Layton Hall Road, with access to the traffic signal at Old Lee Highway.

### Parking Considerations

A long-term conversation is the conversion of the current surface parking lot behind the Police Station into a covered facility, with secure parking for the Police Station on the first floor and public parking for the Sherwood Center and the park on the upper level.



Figure 10. Sketch plans for potential Community Center Alternatives locations, including Van Dyck Park, City Hall, and Providence Park

## MASTER PLANNING SCHEDULE

### Winter 2017

- Site survey, site assessment and initial analysis completed

### Spring 2017

- Formulate Vision, Objectives and Goals, and recommended Concept Plan alternatives
- Advisory Group Meeting #1 held on March 22
- Online Survey posted March 1
- Community Workshop #1 held on April 6 focused on identifying Issues and Opportunities within the park
- Advisory Group Meeting #2 held on April 11 to review draft Vision and Principles and park program
- Advisory Group Meeting #3 held on May 11 to review draft master plan diagrams and program
- Community Workshop #2 held on May 18 focused on master plan recommendations

### Summer 2017

- Advisory Group Meeting #4 held on June 29 to review and identify recommended Concept/Master Plan diagram and program components

### Fall 2017

- Draft Master Plan Document
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Review September 14
- City Council update September 26
- Final Plan Adoption

## Public Process

As called for in the Strategic Plan, a public process was developed to address Van Dyck Park’s needs, aging infrastructure, and site erosion problems. An Advisory Group was appointed and met four times over the course of the planning effort. Two community workshops were held in the Spring of 2017 and were widely publicized and well attended. An online survey ran over three months in the Spring of 2017 and received over 900 responses. Additionally, the project schedule and meeting documents were made available on the web.

City of Fairfax staff, Advisory Board members, and representatives of the City’s Park and Recreation Advisory Board were made available to speak to Home Owners Associations, Civic Groups, and any other interested parties. A list of outreach contacts is included in this document’s Appendices.

Highly visible graphics and flyers were generated to bring attention to the planning effort. A large banner was placed at the Sherwood Center entrance to the park, flyers were distributed throughout the City and the cover of the Summer 2017 issue of LeisureTimes highlighted the development of the Master Plan for Van Dyck Park.



Figure 11. Flyers developed for MP process

### Advisory Group

The City formally invited and established an eight member Advisory Group to work closely with the planning team. Members represented a cross-section of the larger community and served as intermediaries in guiding the master planning process. The Advisory Group met four times



and assisted with moderating the first community workshop. In addition, members were available to speak to the larger community, as requested.

Copies of the minutes from the four meetings are provided in the Appendix.

## Community Workshops

Two evening community workshops were held at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center. Detailed notes and information on the workshops can be found in the Appendix of this document. Workshops were facilitated by Lardner/Klein, City Staff and Advisory Group members and consisted of a brief slide presentation, interactive displays for collecting community feedback, and small and collective group activities for discussion.

### April 2017 Community Workshop 1

Over 60 people attended the April meeting to learn about the master planning effort for Van Dyck Park. Following a review of the identified park issues and opportunities, the meeting moved to small group discussions. Each group was given park pieces, park features measured to scale with a map of the park. Encouraged to select features and locate them as desired, the puzzle pieces prompted discussions related to the park and its features at each table. Conversations were prompted by a series of questions which included:

- Question #1 - What is your favorite memory of Van Dyck Park?
- Question #2 - Who is missing from this park and what would draw (cause them to use) them to Van Dyck Park?
- Question #3 - What is the park's most pressing need?

Following this discussion, group members were encouraged to 'make a park' with the supplied puzzle pieces, building on an earlier exercise using Van Dyck Park in the Strategic Plan development process.



Figure 12. Community meeting on April 16, 2017 at the Sherwood Community Center

## Sample Responses

### Community Workshop #1

#### Question #1

- The "bowl" - there is a little bit of everything
- Learned how to skate board
- Sledding
- Merry go round
- Walking with pets/kids/ exercising on the trails
- Airplane
- Never used the park having lived in City of Fairfax since 1963 - park didn't have items of interest for older families

#### Question #2

- Athletic organizations (good thing)
- Year-round restrooms
- Exercise activities to draw adults

#### Question #3

- Updating facilities
- Don't like having two vehicular entrances to park
- Restrooms
- Skate park replacement
- Areas of the park are inaccessible (add paths)
- Maintenance

## Sample Responses

### Community Workshop #2

#### Concept 1

- Love the signs to welcome people to the park and the trail connections
- Like moving the volleyball courts to create more creative open play space
- Think about the desire path through the park connecting to Daniel's Run
- Like 2 picnic shelters
- Like skate park location
- Support half-court basketball
- Like switchback trails

#### Concept 2

- Living Learning Lab - Love this! No creek access is so frustrating
- Like the playground moved away from the street
- Restroom near picnic shelter
- Split parking into two new parking areas and incorporate infiltration actions
- Create small welcome plaza at University Drive
- Add a hockey/inline hockey rink
- Keep the skate park
- Keep the skate park visible
- Concentrate the recreation features
- Remove mulch from playground and replace with soft 'floor'
- Replace/keep lower picnic shelter
- Add zipline
- Like one entrance (add a traffic signal)
- Use contemporary play equipment in playground

### May 2017 Community Workshop 2

Over 35 people attended the second Community Workshop to review two Concept Plans developed for the park. Attendees were encouraged to mark up displays with dots, indicate which of the park features images appealed to them in terms of style and character, and to share their excitement and concerns in a general and open discussion following a brief slide presentation.



Figure 13. Interactive "dot" exercise board



Figure 14. Collecting feedback at the May Workshop

## Surveys

In addition to the public workshops, the City of Fairfax created a survey through Survey Monkey® as a method to garner public feedback. The survey was available to the public through a link on the City's official Van Dyck Park planning process Web site from March to June 2017. 879 surveys were completed. The final survey results are included in the Appendix of this document.

### On-line Survey Findings - 879 surveys completed

#### Top 10 responses from 2014 Strategic Master Plan Survey.

- Water spray/fountain play area (56 points)
- Better bathroom facilities (45)
- Add real bike paths to the park (37)
- Improve the skate park (31)
- Make forested areas accessible nature areas (30)
- Bike riding area for kids (29)
- Master Plan for an Urban Park (23)
- Dog Park
- Balance between active use and natural areas (18)
- Trees and benches (18)

#### Top responses from 2017 Van Dyck Master Plan Survey (over 100 votes)

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Permanent Restrooms (added) (513 votes)     | • Sledding Hill (183)      |
| • Playground (443)                            | • Public Art (added) (152) |
| • Walking Trails (443)                        | • Stream (128)             |
| • Open Play Areas (380)                       |                            |
| • Shade Structures (added) (278)              |                            |
| • Water Feature (added) (276)                 |                            |
| • Picnics/Picnic Pavilions (264)              |                            |
| • Woodlands (237)                             |                            |
| • Dog Park (added) (237)                      |                            |
| • Fitness Playground for Adults (added) (225) |                            |
| • Amphitheater (added) (203)                  |                            |

Figure 15. Survey results comparison

## Adjacent Property Owners

A meeting was held with the staff at St. Leo's, who shares a lengthy property boundary with the park. Discussion topics included the need to provide a safe and secure campus for the school's students, while recognizing that the school makes use of the public park resources. It was agreed that an informal delineation of the boundaries, formed through plantings would be useful, and a formal trail link located on park property that would connect the park with Cornwall Drive and surrounding neighborhood would be included in any master planning efforts.

## Site Assessment

### Context and Setting



Figure 16. Crest of the sledding hill

Van Dyck Park is a large, centrally located open space in the City of Fairfax. Generally falling into three types of parklands, the lower elevations are heavily treed along Accotink Creek and University Drive. This area is riddled with hard and soft trails, and is frequently used by dog walkers, runners, and people wishing to escape the surrounding urban environment.

The mid-section of the park includes large open grassy areas that invite park users to use their imagination and dream, develop their own style of play, read or relax. Most importantly, this area houses the winter time ‘sledding hills’ that have provided fun to generations of residents on snowy days.

The upper park, located off of Old Lee Highway is the most traditionally developed area of the park. Home to the park’s multiple playgrounds, picnic shelters, parking lot, skate park, all manner of sports courts (tennis, basketball, volleyball), this section of the park is the most well known to the larger City of Fairfax community.

### Overall Topographic and Regulatory Features

The “natural” character and topography of the park land at the north and west contrasts with the level, developed character of the park to the south and east, along Old Lee Highway. Centrally located in the park is a prominent topographic depression designated the “Armistice Turtora Bowl.” The center, bottom of the bowl is roughly the size of a regulation soccer field. To the north and west of the bowl, along the entirety of the park’s north and western border, the topography slopes steeply toward the Accotink Creek. These steep slopes are mostly covered by tree canopy with the exception of the sloping land to the north of the bowl and the land between the creek and the Police Station, also referred to as the Sledding Hill. The Accotink Creek is buffered by a regulatory Resource Protection Area (RPA).



Figure 17. Park survey, spring 2017

### Topographic Survey

Dominion Surveyors, Inc. completed a site survey for the park in the spring of 2017. Included in the survey are key components of the park including, topographic contours, site utilities, structures, playground equipment, sidewalks, trees, property boundaries, and other relevant infrastructure.

A large amount of the park’s acreage is currently undeveloped. Per the Strategic Plan, the goal is to preserve at least 40% of the park in its undeveloped state.

**Zoning**

Van Dyck Park is zoned Residential Medium (RM) and is bounded by single-family residential properties predominantly to the north and northwest. St. Leo’s Catholic Church is the park’s neighbor on the east, and Northern Virginia Mennonite and Christian Science Church are located to the southeast, across Old Lee Highway. Joseph Willard Center (RH Residential High) and Layton Hall Apartments (PD-R Planned Development Residential) border the park on the southwest. The Old Town Fairfax Transition District borders the park at the location of the Layton Hall Apartments (PD-R). Daniels Run Elementary is across from St. Leo’s Church, southeast of the park, across Old Lee Highway.

**Circulation**

**Vehicle**

Ingress and egress to and from the park can be challenging for vehicles due to the traffic patterns on Old Lee Highway. Given the number of schools in the corridor and the adjacent churches, there are predictable pulses of heavy traffic. During some of these periods a school crossing guard is posted on the at the crosswalk, which can help ameliorate the challenge of exiting the park onto Old Lee Highway.

There are two current vehicular access points into the park, both from Old Lee Highway. The primary park entry is located at the northern side of the park on the park’s border shared with St. Leo’s school.

Bus service to the park is available on the City of Fairfax’s CUE Bus Service route via Old Lee Highway. A sheltered bus stop is located in front of the Sherwood Center and an additional bus stop is located at the border with St. Leo’s School.

**Parking**

The entry drive terminates at the park’s single parking lot which provides 87 parking spaces—four of which are ADA accessible. A second entrance, serving the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center and City of Fairfax Police Station, is located on the park’s southern border with the Community Center. The park currently does not have permanent bike racks in place.

An additional 189 spaces are available at the Sherwood Center and the Police Station that potentially can be used by park visitors dependent on the level of activity at the Sherwood Center. During some events, the Sherwood Center enters into a formal shared parking agreement with

Park Acreage in 2017		
Total Park Acres	36	36
Acres regulated as Resource Protection Area and 100-year Floodplain	6.6	
Developed Acres	13.9	
Subtotal Acres regulated and developed		20.5
Undeveloped Acres Remaining		15.5
% of Undeveloped Acres		43%



Figure 18. Park entrance at the Sherwood Center



Figure 19. Existing parking at Van Dyck



Figure 20. Pedestrian entrance at University Drive



Figure 21. One of two drinking fountains



Figure 22. Existing grassy, open play area and trail

adjacent properties. Van Dyck Park does not currently have any such agreements. Parking pressure increases on nice days when the Sherwood Center is fully rented, and on weekends and during after school hours.

### **Pedestrian**

Formally identified park pedestrian entrances are located off of University Drive via a bridge over Accotink Creek and at Old Lee Highway where the sidewalk intersects with the park drive and the drive to the Sherwood Center. A second entry on Old Lee Highway is implied with the crosswalk at the northern end of the park, but the walk currently is terminated by the park’s fencing and hedges. Informal access occurs via the St. Leo’s Catholic Church parking lot, connecting the Cornwall Road neighborhood with the park.

A network of trails criss-crosses the park, paved with a variety of materials that are not often appropriate for the trail’s location. There is no accessible path between the lower portion of the park off of University Drive and the more developed portion of the park at the top near Old Lee Highway.

The City of Fairfax has an extensive trail network throughout the community. Van Dyck Park sits at the intersection of several trails, providing the link between trails along Daniel’s Run and to the west on Kenmore. Clear signage and trail markers are not currently in place, so a user must ‘know’ the connections rather than discovering them.

The 2014 Strategic Plan calls for renovation of the 1.23 miles of trail at Van Dyck Park, recommending widening to 10’ and milling and repaving with asphalt. Many of the existing trails are deteriorating due to erosion on steep slopes, or improper application of paving materials (gravel instead of asphalt on steep slopes, for example.) Erosion issues are occurring near the tennis courts and at trails parallel to the creek, at the bottom of steep terrain in the northern part of the park.

Three crosswalks on Old Lee Highway and one crosswalk on University Drive currently serve the park’s pedestrian and bicycle users. The City of Fairfax is currently in discussion regarding the future configuration of Old Lee Highway, including the location of crosswalks tying into the park. Any plans for the park must accommodate the right-of-way and setback needs for future improvements. At most, it is anticipated that forty feet setback from the current Old Lee Highway centerline will be adequate for any corridor improvements.

### **Infrastructure and Utilities**

Utility infrastructure is limited in the park. Electric lines run to a pole light between the basketball court and the playground; tennis courts are also lighted. A single water line connects to two drinking fountains near the existing picnic shelter and playground. Two systems of storm

structures and connectivity lines terminate at outfalls directed toward the Accotink Creek; one system starts at the northern end of the existing parking, crosses under the tennis courts and continues toward the outfall to the creek. The second system branches from the Bowl area to the skate park and the Police Station parking. Storm structures encircle the Bowl and connect to an outfall at the northeast.

There park is not served by permanent restrooms within the park, although when open, the public may use the indoor restrooms available at the Sherwood Center and the Police Station. A sewer trunk line runs parallel to Accotink Creek in a mowed easement just on the park side of the creek. No sewer line currently serves the park. Two sewer lines branch from a main line along Old Lee Highway connecting to facilities at the Sherwood Center and Police Station. Service for permanent restrooms would either have to tie into the line at the base of the hill, or a available capacity determination would need to be made for the lines currently serving the adjacent public facilities.

### **Impervious Surfaces**

Impervious surfaces in the park include buildings, picnic shelters, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, skate park surfacing, basketball, and tennis courts. There are currently no designed ‘hard-surface’ pervious surfaces in place in the park such as porous pavers or pavement.

### **Accotink Creek Stream Valley**

The stream is an unsung component of the park and can become much better integrated within the park as a park feature and as a functioning ecosystem. The 2008 study identifies the issues and makes recommendations for stream restoration practices. The paths near the stream continue to have washouts and erosion issues. Recent park operation activities added rock riprap to several stems leading to the stream from the paths. There are two areas where water crosses over the top of the existing trail. The outfalls converge about 40 feet downstream where there is severe bank erosion. Although a temporary fix has been made, a more holistic approach is needed and should be incorporated in any stream restoration work undertaken by the City of Fairfax. One possibility is to incorporate with any site plan improvements a drainage plan. An option to address the trail flooding and wash out is to raise this section of trail to allow for pipe installation under the trail<sup>1</sup>.

### **Vegetation**

While extensive assessment of the existing vegetation was not performed, it is clear that ornamental trees and shrubs have been incrementally planted on site over the years. Trees and turf grass are predominant in the landscape, while a few ornamental shrubs and herbaceous plants are located at focal points, such as park entry signs.



Figure 23. Surface drain from the parking lot to an inlet drain

### **Other Park Amenities<sup>1</sup>**

- Benches - 5+
- Picnic Tables - 18
- Grills - 3
- Trash receptacles - 5
- Drinking fountains - 2

<sup>1</sup> See Strategic Plan Appendix C pages 83-84 for more details on condition of existing amenities



Figure 24. Existing woodlands and meadow

<sup>1</sup> Email correspondence received from Satasho Eto, Stormwater Program specialist, 04/17/17.

## **Selected Public Comments on Park Features**

‘We love the park, but since we have two little kids who refuse to use portapotties, we lately have been going to other parks with bathrooms, despite living nearby.’

‘Safety is a consideration but I would like for the children to be able to explore the stream in some way.’

‘I would like to see another entrance or exit for the park that does not empty into Old Lee Highway. PLEASE!’

‘More seating and smaller picnic areas outside the pavilions.’

‘LOTS more trees need to be planted in, around, and near all the playground equipment. It gets HOT in the summer.’

‘It would be great to have adult fitness equipment.’

‘More walking and hiking trails.’

‘Please keep the open space and nature. There is so little of it in town.’

‘The skatepark needs to be redone desperately.’

‘Update the playground equipment.’

Some of the trees originating from Landscape Architect Don Lederer’s 1967 plan are likely still present in the park. Evergreen trees along the trail near the tennis court particularly identify with the earlier plan. A row of trees and vegetation is prominent along the border between St. Leo’s Church and the park. Shade trees are generally along the trails and aligning the entry drive to the Sherwood Center and Police Station. A few shade trees are located around the playgrounds and encircle the parking lot. Clusters of trees sporadically surround the Bowl and open grassy area between the tennis courts and parking lot. Memorial trees are planted in several locations.

Woodlands characterize the stream corridor at the north of the park, suggesting a “natural” landscape. Understory in these areas do contain a significant amount of nonnative invasive plants.

### **Views and Vistas**

Repeatedly, park visitors said that vistas within and towards the park were critical to retain and to enhance. Vistas into the park particularly along Old Lee Highway are key visual qualities to protect and to improve. Long views across the bowl from multiple points are also cherished.

### **Park Features**

The 2014 Strategic Plan produced a qualitative assessment of structures, circulation systems, activity areas, miscellaneous amenities, and general conditions at Van Dyck Park. Priority for addressing these conditions are ranked low, medium, or high and can be found in a detailed assessment in the Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup>.

### **The “Bowl” and Open Play Areas**

The central open, grassy “Turtora Bowl” feature of the park was designated as such in honor of the volunteer services and community leadership of citizen Armistice Turtora. This open space and others in the park are embraced by the community. Unprogrammed open space that encourages free play is scarce within the City. The bowl is also a beloved sledding hill on snowy days in the winter months. Two other open grassy areas are located between the tennis courts and the parking lot, and at the sloped hill directly behind the Police Station; this area is known by the community as the second “sledding hill” within the park. None of the park is programmed or permitted for formal athletic games or practices freeing the use of the level lawn areas to the casual user on a first come basis.

### **Playgrounds**

There are four playground areas within the park. The 2014 Strategic Plan classifies the playgrounds at Van Dyck Park as being minimally

<sup>2</sup> Appendix C of the City of Fairfax Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, Events and Cultural Arts (June 2014), page C-83.



accessible. The Strategic Plan calls for the installation of a barrier-free playground in Van Dyck Park.

Some of the materials used to meet safety standards also improve accessibility due to the nature of their surfacing. The current playground surfacing is engineered wood fiber, that although serves as an accessible route surfacing, it needs frequent maintenance to continue to meet the accessibility requirements.

Not all of the existing play equipment at the park is considered to be accessible. Some pieces of equipment could be retrofitted with the installation of transfer stations or ramps. Equipment materials tend towards plastic, a material falling out of favor with today's parents of young children who are voicing a preference for more natural materials. Playground equipment includes swings, sand box, spring riders, jungle gym, merry-go-round, climbers, and seesaw. Two small play areas for tots are separated from two other, larger play areas for older children.

Park visitors have also complained that the configuration of the four play areas is so spread out that it makes it challenging to bring more than one child to play, particularly if any are preschoolers. Concerns were raised about the large playground's proximity to the road and parking area. Currently, the parking lot bisects the park and creates a barrier or hazard for pedestrian movement between the upper area of the park where the playground and skate park are located and the lower more undeveloped area of the park and the tennis courts.

Concerns regarding the lack of shade have also been raised. There are some plantings near the playground, but most are shrub hedges and low growing vegetation. People did say that their children loved to hide in the vegetation, so although not shade providing, it does serve a play function with in the park.

### Picnic Shelters and Gazebo

The large 34' x 60' rental picnic shelter built in 1974 is known as the Rotary Shelter. Located between the parking lot and Old Lee Highway, it contains 10 tables. Its concrete pad has cracks and is in poor condition. The rental capacity of the shelter is 80 people. Used frequently as a shelter for smaller gatherings when not rented to a single party, the park may be better served by smaller rental facilities that can be rented as group to one user when required. The shelter does provide a shade structure with a clear line of sight to the large playground.

A small rental picnic shelter, 30' x 15', is located at the base of the hill below the tennis courts. Invisible from much of the park, it can provide a quiet getaway for people looking for a less active park experience. Its capacity is 40 people and its rental history is often for birthday parties or similar. The shelter provides five tables and a grill. This picnic shelter is in poor condition and needs a new roof. The shelter is not easily



Figure 25. Existing playground component



Figure 26. Existing picnic shelter



Figure 27. Existing skate park



Figure 28. Existing basketball court



Figure 29. Existing portable restrooms

accessible, as it is not close to the parking lot and is at the bottom of a hill.

A third structure, a small octagon gazebo with a dirt floor, is located immediately adjacent to the tennis courts. It contains three tables and is in poor condition. There is not an accessible path to this structure, unless accessed via St. Leo’s Catholic Church’s parking lot behind the St. Leo’s School.

### Skate Park

The skate park is within a fenced area near the Old Lee Highway edge of the park. Constructed with metal skate components in 2003, it is known for being a noisy activity within the park. A chain-link fence encircles the components, with one gated entrance. The skate park is located south of the basketball court, and is one of the closest features to the Sherwood Center and Old Lee Highway.

### Tennis Courts

Four lighted tennis courts are located in the mid-level section of the park, adjacent to St. Leo’s Catholic Church. One of the property’s parking lots is informally used by tennis players as it is much closer to the tennis courts than is the park parking area. The courts were resurfaced in 2004 and 2007. Lights are programmed to work from 4-11 p.m. by pushing a button at each of the front gates.

### Volleyball Courts

Three sand volleyball courts are located in the southeast corner of the park, visible from Old Lee Highway.

### Basketball Court

A single basketball court is located just north of the skate park, and was resurfaced in 2013.

### Fitness Stations

Fitness stations are located along the trail, though some are missing parts.

### Restrooms

There are three portable restrooms near the parking lot. They are in poor condition. The two public buildings adjacent to the park - the Sherwood Center and the Police Station - do allow the general public to use their facilities when they are open. Most park users are unfamiliar with this policy. The indoor restrooms are also a fairly long distance from the playground and park parking lot.

Comments received during the park planning exercise frequently referenced the desire for upgraded, permanent restrooms.

## Signage

Park signs are in poor condition. Identification signs are located at park picnic shelters and entry signs are at the entrances on Old Lee Highway and University Drive, although the entry sign at the pedestrian bridge crossing off of University Drive is hidden from view until the visitor is well within the park itself. A park rules sign is posted in the park.

## Compilation of Existing Conditions Assessment

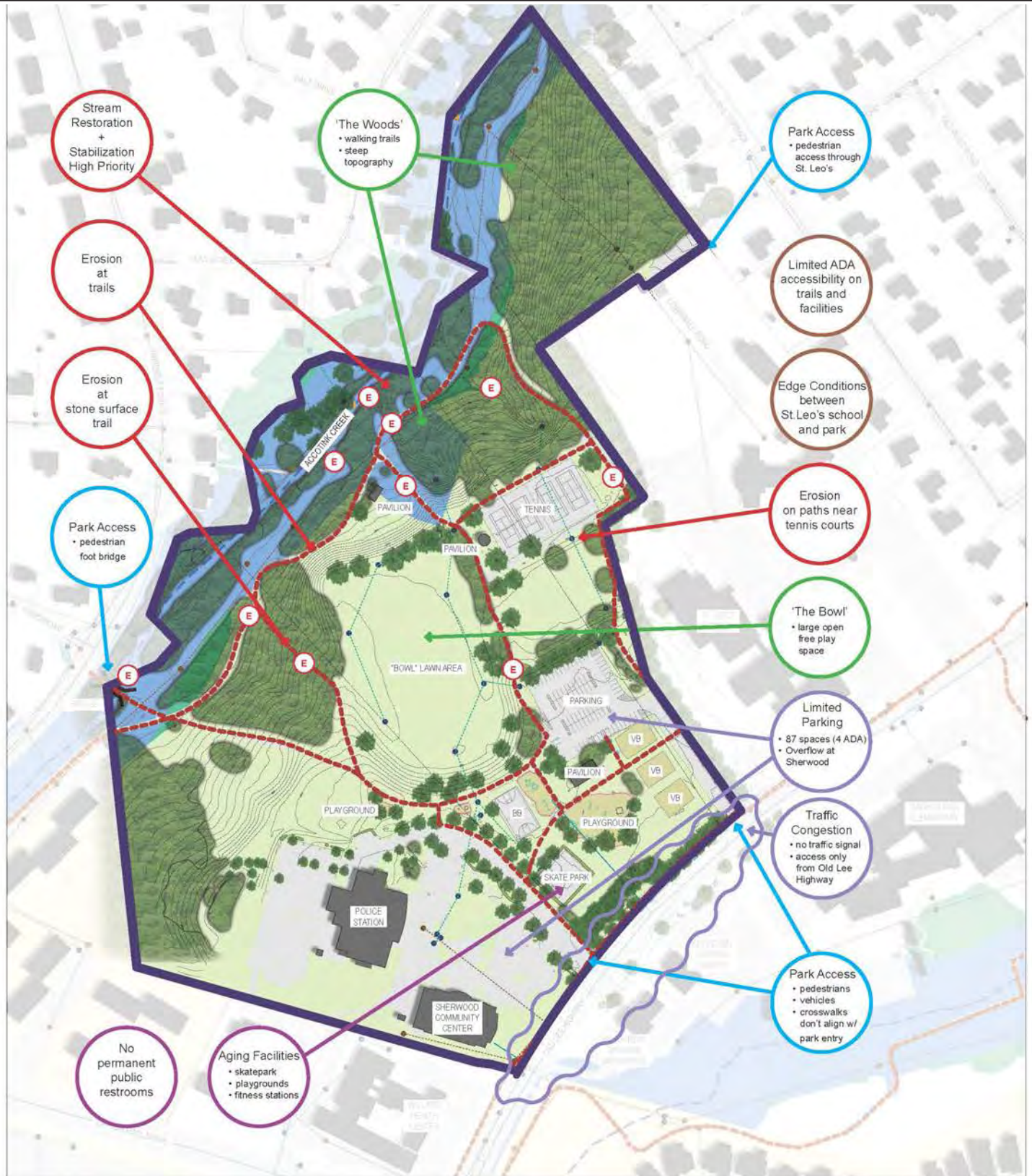
A diagram was generated that summarizes the highlights from the text above. It is shown in Figure 31.

## Issues and Opportunities

More comprehensive diagrams were generated to summarize the Issues and Opportunities presented within the park. Key items were collected from the Strategic Plan, outreach surveys, online survey comments, Advisory Group discussions, field explorations and comments received at the two public workshops. These findings are highlighted on Figure 32, page 23, and corresponding lists shown on pages 21-22.



Figure 30 Existing entrance sign

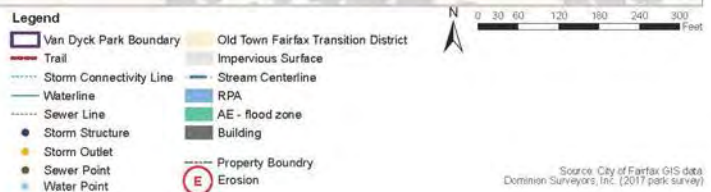


# Van Dyck Park Master Plan

City of Fairfax **50 & FORWARD**  
VAN DYCK PARK MASTER PLAN

Existing Conditions Assessment

Figure 31. Existing Conditions Assessment Diagram



# ISSUES

## Traffic / Circulation

- ① Challenge of exiting the park on Old Lee Highway (A busy thoroughfare connecting historic Old Town to Routes 66, 50 and 29).
- ② Connectivity between park parking lot and Sherwood Center/Police Station.
- ③ Traffic congestion turning into and from destinations on Old Lee Highway (school traffic patrol at crosswalk during the week, but still a challenge to exit the park).

## Parking

- ① Parking lot is worn, does not have a pedestrian pathway, landscaping, or stormwater treatment integrated within the lot (only one storm drain for entire lot). Currently there are 87 spaces (4 ADA). At peak use times, parking availability is insufficient. There is no signage at entrance.
- ② Event parking is minimal. Patrons can use parking at the Police Station and Sherwood Center.
- ③ Parking lot in the park is only accessible from park drive along St. Leo's boundary. Connection to Park parking is unclear from Sherwood Center access.

## Access

- ① Confusion with double park entrances - One at the Sherwood Center/Police Station and one adjacent to St. Leo's.
- ② Only one bridge crossing Accotink Creek along the entire western perimeter of the park. Park entrance from University is not well signed.
- ③ No access to traffic signal at Layton Hall Drive and Old Lee Highway from park.

## Trails

- ① Missing trail connections to neighborhoods north and west of St. Leo's Church.
- ② Trail surface treatments (gravel, stone, asphalt) and slopes may not be appropriate given locations, erosion issues, and ADA requirements. Of the 1.25 miles of trails in the park, most meet accessibility/ADA standards, but running and cross slopes should be reviewed.

## Stormwater/Erosion

- ① Ponding and erosion on trails.
- ② Stream bank erosion is severe. (See Accotink Creek Stream Stability Assessment and Prioritization Plan Supplemental Report for Daniels Run.)

## Facilities/Park Features

- ① No permanent restrooms (3 portable restrooms serve the park). When buildings are open, there is access to restrooms at Sherwood Center and the Police Station. No public sewer serves the park. Public water does serve the park and there is one drinking fountain. Need ADA accessible facilities.
- ② The small shelter (50 capacity) is disconnected from other park facilities and is poorly visible. Tables and benches may not be ADA compliant. Need to improve attractiveness as rental property and revenue producer.
- ③ The large shelter (210 capacity) does not have electricity. Tables and benches may not be ADA compliant. Need to improve attractiveness as a rental property and a revenue producer.
- ④ The gazebo is not available as a rental facility.
- ⑤ The large playground needs to be renovated and meet ADA accessibility requirements. Barrier-free equipment and sensory rich environment is desired.
- ⑥ The skatepark is dated and needs replacement. It has reached the end of its useful lifespan and consumes a large piece of park frontage.
- ⑦ Existing fitness equipment is aging and could be made ADA accessible and be better integrated into the park.
- ⑧ Tennis courts (4) are heavily used and trend analysis shows an increased demand for tennis facilities. Tennis courts are lighted.
- ⑨ Volleyball courts (3) are used seasonally and prominently located at the frontage of the park. Volleyball courts are not lighted.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Traffic / Congestion

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- ① Redesign park circulation/roads, parking, and park entrances. Consider single entrance to park shared with Sherwood Center/Police Station.
- ② ③ Review current circulation patterns and determine if a secondary entrance is warranted, perhaps with some form of future traffic calming feature at that intersection.

### Parking

---

- ① Redesign or relocate parking with sufficient spaces and accessible routes and walkways connecting to key park facilities. Integrate stormwater management measures to mitigate the impact of impermeable surfaces through, for example, pervious pavements, bioinfiltration facilities (rain gardens), and vegetated swales. Identify potential overflow or off-site parking opportunities for special events.
- ② Event parking is minimal. Patrons can use parking at the police station and Sherwood Center.
- ③ Parking accessible only from park drive along St. Leo's boundary. Connection to park parking is unclear when using Sherwood Center access drive.

### Access

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- ① Implement well sited wayfinding signage for all park entrances. Coordinate with park neighbors on access points and park use.
- ② Create a trail connection (10' wide) to neighborhoods north of the park using the existing footpath crossing Accotink Creek and as recommended in the Fairfax Boulevard Approved Master Plan.
- ③ Consider access to Layton Hall Drive at the intersection of Old Lee Highway, if traffic study supports such.

### Trails

---

- ① See item #2 above in "Access."
- ② Redesign and regrade trail circulation for pedestrian and bike access. Install resilient surface materials and use pervious pavements (i.e. permeable pavers), where appropriate. Meet ADA accessible standards where possible, maintaining running slopes at 5% max and cross slopes at 2% max. Ensure a variety of walking experiences and include signage, painted mile markers, refreshed exercise equipment, and interpretive features. Consider a bike loop/trike track for use in warm months and convert it to an ice skate track in cold weather months.

### Stormwater/Erosion

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- ① See item # 2 above in "Trails."
- ② The Accotink Creek Stream Stability Assessment & Prioritization Plan Supplemental Report indicates that restoration of the creek segment (Jean Street) at the park is a high priority, as the bank erosion hazard index (BEHI) is rated "extreme." Immediate action should be taken to restore the creek. Stormwater management measures recommended in the Master Plan will mitigate impact of runoff and avoid exacerbation of erosion.

### Facilities/Park Features

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- ① Install permanent, accessible restrooms with plumbing in a well-sited location in the park (ease of access for children, disabled, and elderly).
- ② ③ ④ Determine the demand for shelters and reconstruct new shelters, as needed. Site shelters in appropriate locations, taking into consideration access to parking, restrooms, and other park facilities. Include electrical units where needed. Include only ADA compliant tables and benches.
- ⑤ Renovate the large playground. Design should be barrier-free, shaded, and focused on sensory rich components. It should be inclusive/ ADA accessible. Consider a water spray / fountain play area. Link natural resources, such as the creek and forest, with educational components/ program.
- ⑥ Replace the skate park with components that challenge skaters, are aesthetically pleasing (sculptural), and multifunctional (blends with the landscape).
- ⑦ Install new, ADA accessible fitness equipment better integrated into the park.
- ⑧ Consider additional tennis courts and improvements to existing tennis courts.
- ⑨ Consider lighting the existing volleyball courts and/or relocating the courts, as appropriate.

## SPATIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Maintain minimum of 40% of park as undeveloped open space (Strategic Plan)
- Maximize open space/flexible use spaces, such as the Armistice Turtora Bowl and sledding hill
- Review relationship of activities—reinforce each other or create friction?
- How should the park frontage on Old Lee Highway be treated?
- Recognize park has three primary areas—developed upper area; mid-zone with slope and turf; and woods at bottom of slope

## WHAT IS MISSING?

- Permanent, accessible restrooms
- Better lighting for existing facilities
- Central gathering space for all ages such as a plaza or sitting area (smaller than the bowl)
- Image pop of the park—when you think Van Dyck Park, what comes to mind?
- Outdoor space for activities associated with the Community Center to enhance adult and senior programming within the park
- Distinct, attractive park frontage on Old Lee Highway that introduces park to viewer
- Clear pedestrian entrances

## MORE QUESTIONS

- Should new programming be added to the park? If so, what should be considered?
- Should any activities or programming be removed from the park?
- If the proposed Community Center were to be located within Van Dyck Park (currently under consideration), where is the best site for it that will enhance the park?

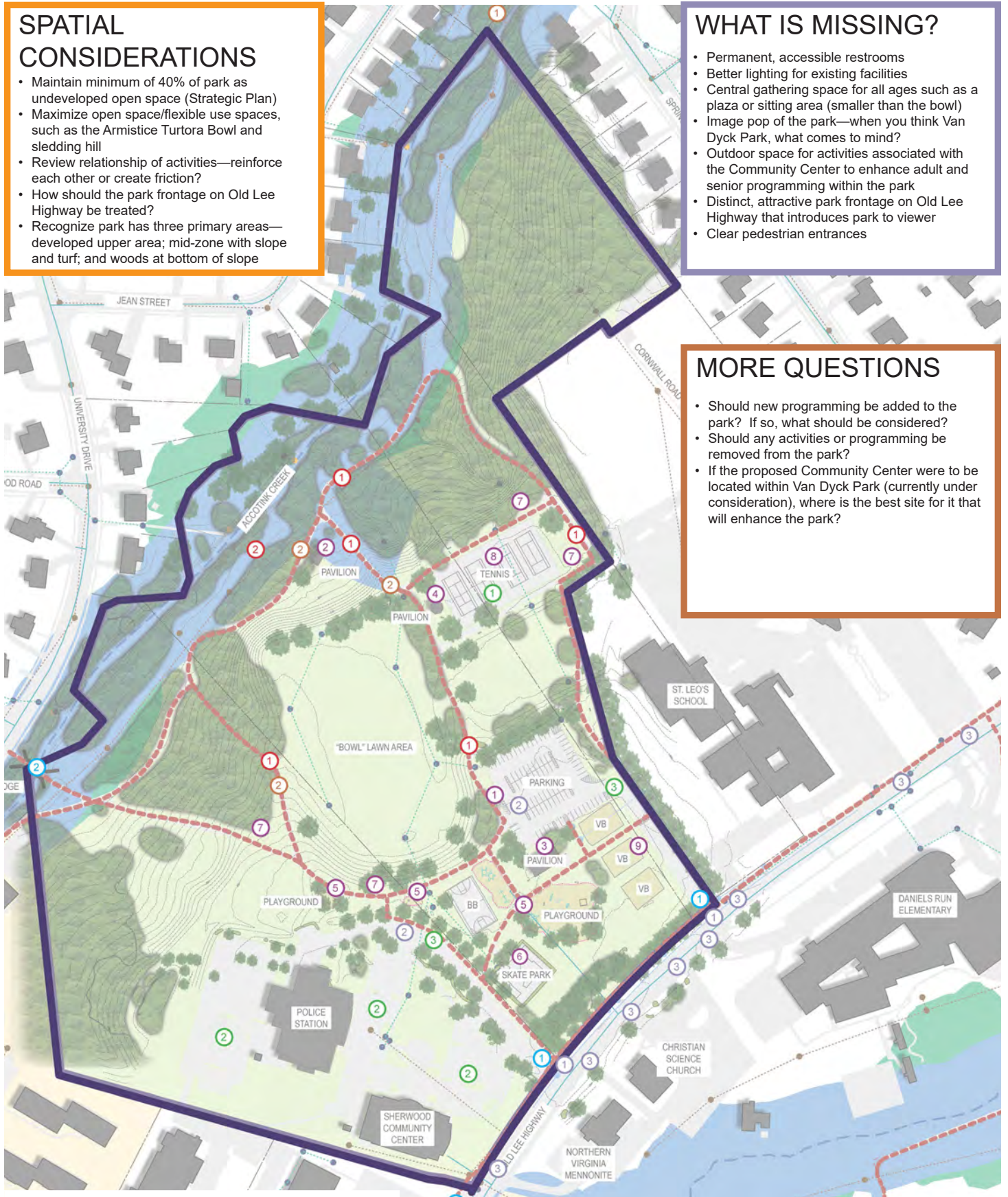


Figure 32. Issues and Opportunities Diagram

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## Master Plan Development

Van Dyck Park is a beloved City of Fairfax institution. It holds a number of activities shared generation after generation. Heavily used, it is showing its wear and age. The master planning process provides the opportunity for the City of Fairfax to ensure that Van Dyck Park as a whole is a place and not merely a catchment of an assortment of unrelated recreation features and activities.

Although in many ways the park is perceived as the City's front door, it must serve the function of a home's front porch and backyard, a relaxed community-oriented space.

This plan proposes a few tweaks to the physical organization of the park and its layout that will ensure that the park will work and function better, and continue in its role as the crown jewel within the City's park system, welcoming and embracing the entire community and its activities.

### Master Plan Concept Formulation

While the community is drawn to the park for differing reasons—whether taking kids to the playground, walking the dog, or cultivating skateboard skills—there is a sense that there are multiple “parks” within Van Dyck; A variety of experiences can be had within the same park.

The challenge of this master plan is to aggregate these disparate recreational uses into a coherent, well-organized program and place. The initial effort of this master planning process analyzed the disparate pieces of the park. Following that analysis, understanding the park's historic use patterns while incorporating the recommendations from the 2014 Strategic Plan led to the development of a Key Word Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. These reflected past and directed future patterns of use and overarching guidelines for the construction of the master plan concept alternatives. Following the direction of the Van Dyck Park 50 & Forward Vision Statement to integrate park components so that they are planned and further designed with the whole park experience in mind—with its distinct sense of place, connection, and community - two concept alternatives were generated, and then compressed into the recommended master plan.

In many ways, park users were more easily able to identify what the park is not. It is not a site for large city events (with some exceptions), performances or single use rental occasions. It is not a place to ‘be filled’ with additional programming such as organized athletics or dog parks.



Figure 33. Young women selling ice cream cones in the park

### Features to Remain, Untouched and Unchanged

- The Bowl
- Sledding hills
- Tennis courts
- Woods
- Open lawn areas

### Features to be Tweaked, Improved and Added

- Restrooms
- Playground - barrier-free and multi-age
- Parking
- Trail network and pedestrian entrances
- Entry drives
- Stream
- Picnic Shelters
- Skate park
- Gathering spaces

**Vision Statement and Key Words**

**Vision Statement**

**Sense of Place.** The heart of the community, the Crown Jewel of the park system and premier park within a ten-mile radius, beyond a great place, this is a fantastic place that is recognizable city-wide.

**Community Connections.** Park facilities, activities, trails and scheduled events that regularly draw the community together. Views of the park draw the passerby in visually.

**Personal Health and Fitness.** Trails for running and walking, fitness and health programming, adult fitness and children’s activities incorporated in accessible equipment and recreational opportunities.

**Multi-generational Use.** The park hosts activities and equipment that embraces the full array of City of Fairfax residents.

**Woodlands Management and Stream Restoration.** The park is a showcase and provides an educational laboratory of good natural management and stream restoration techniques and Best Practices.

<b>Vision Statement: Key Words</b>				
Vision   <i>“Amazing Experiences”</i>				
Guiding Principles from the 2014 to 2024 Strategic Plan				
<b>Sense of Place</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>	<b>Economic Vitality</b>	<b>Conservation &amp; Stewardship</b>	<b>Strategic Partnerships</b>
<b>Natural Resources</b>	<b>Natural Resources</b>		<b>Natural Resources</b>	
	<b>Accessible Spaces</b>			
<b>Stream Restoration</b>			<b>Stream Restoration</b>	<b>Stream Restoration</b>
<b>Branding Identity</b>		<b>Branding Identity</b>		<b>Branding Identity</b>
	Trail Connections	Trail Connections	Trail Connections	Trail Connections
<b>Art in the Parks</b>		<b>Art in the Parks</b>		<b>Art in the Parks</b>
<b>Active Recreation</b>	<b>Active Recreation</b>			<b>Active Recreation</b>
<b>Events and Programs</b>		<b>Events and Programs</b>		<b>Events and Programs</b>
<b>Socializing Places</b>	<b>Socializing Places</b>			
<b>Family Fun</b>	<b>Family Fun</b>		<b>Family Fun</b>	

Figure 34. Key Words

Over and over in multiple meetings and discussions, the message was clear that this park is valued for its informal COMMUNITY gathering space. Community is the key word to articulating the park's identity and role within the City of Fairfax. The park is a place to run into neighbors while walking a dog, have a picnic or host a birthday party in a picnic shelter rental. It is casual, not heavily programmed, that while welcoming those who are not city residents to the park, the park is not intended to serve as a regional attraction and destination park, nor to have features within it that do such.

## Open Space Preservation

Recognized in this master planning effort is the City's objective to maintain a balanced distribution of active and passive recreation, open space, and natural areas throughout the City. The City's Strategic Plan calls for preservation of at least 40% of Van Dyck Park as undeveloped land. The Strategic Plan's open space priority is upheld, as 43% of the park is undeveloped open space, excluding the RPA and floodplain.

## Design Directives

The big picture concept for the master plan vision has four over-arching physical design directives.

- Enhance the park's sense of being a community space while expanding its multi-generational appeal
- Use the architecture of the proposed park features as an identifying branding entity. Combine public art implementation and park design.
- Use vegetation as an organizing element within the park by expanding the woodlands throughout the park, progressing from wild and natural woodlands along Accotink Creek to an ordered woodland fringe of living shade structures along the top elevation of the bowl and the path network to a gridded urban street tree pattern on the public plaza abutting Old Lee Highway
- Link the park to the larger City-wide trail network by creating a creek to creek trail link within Van Dyck Park between Daniel's Run and Accotink Creek

## Park Character Areas

The master planning effort identified three distinct park areas within Van Dyck Park. Derived from the park's existing features and site conditions, these areas were tied to proposed park programming activities.

- The Front Door
- The Bowl and Woodlands
- The Stream Valley

Alternative Concept Plans were developed that each reflected the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles and the site's character. Shared with the community in the second Workshop, the plans were also reviewed by the Advisory Group over several meetings.

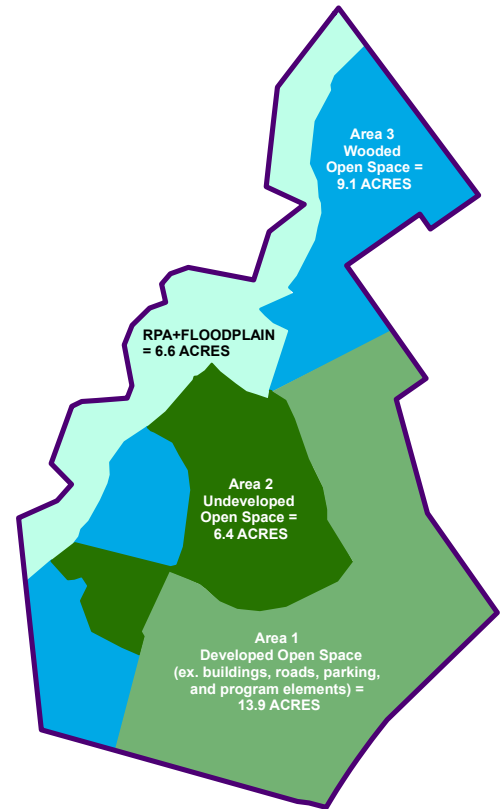


Figure 35. 40% Open Space Diagram

## Action Plan Open Space Strategy

1.3 Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure that at least 40% of parks designated as "Community Park" land (i.e. Van Dyck Park and Providence Park) remains undeveloped and is maintained as open space and buffer to maintain a balance of active and passive areas at each designated "Community Park." Trails could be located in the undeveloped portion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, Events and Cultural Arts, City of Fairfax, Virginia. Page 36.



Figure 36. The “Front Door”

Looking at the park lands as a whole and related to the 40% open space strategy, there are three apparent character areas.

① **The Front Door of the Park**

The grand welcoming experience begins for most at the top of the park along Old Lee Highway where views of and into the park are available to the passerby and the park user. This area is the most developed portion of the site and is the active core area of the park. It includes park features such as the playground, multiple court sports, gathering areas, picnic shelters and parking.

② **The Bowl and Woodlands**

The central “band” of park land consists of open, unstructured play areas, grassy lawns such as the base of the bowl, sledding hills, and extensive woodlands. Activities include informal recreation, pick-up athletic games in the bowl and areas for contemplative sitting and strolling.

③ **The Stream Valley**

Characterized by the Accotink Creek corridor and associated natural features, this area is prime for restoration, educational programs and activities, community demonstration projects and nature trails or boardwalks. Opportunities for hands-on learning, nature play and environmental education exist in tandem with proposed stream restoration work.



Figure 37. The Bowl & Woodlands



Figure 38. The Stream Valley



Figure 39. Park Character Areas

## Concept Alternative Diagrams and Park Program Options

Organizing the information collected throughout this process, two concept diagrams were developed for discussion at the May 18th Community Workshop. Along with the concept diagrams, photo boards eliciting experiential character of park components were posted, where color coded sticker dots for “like” and “do not like” were provided to collect reactions.

A draft program was generated for the development of the Concept Diagrams. Although the proposals were similar for two of the three character areas of the park, the park’s frontage along Old Lee Highway - The Front Door - differed significantly in the arrangement of similar program features. The Bowl and Woodlands and The Stream Valley areas of the park are to remain largely untouched, aside from restoration and trail improvements. Reactions to the concepts and workshop materials are documented in the Appendix.

The table below illustrates the physical location of each park feature, and how the Concepts differ for such. Actual square footage for features is included in the Probable Estimate of Cost in a different section of the document.

	Concept 1 Points	Concept 2 Points
<b>The Front Door</b>		
<b>Multi-age Playground</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leave playground at existing site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move to site of existing parking - Expand and consolidate smaller playgrounds in one area for multi-age use Materials – wood, metal</li> </ul>
<b>Skate Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North side of Police Station on edge of sledding hill - Materials - concrete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Along Old Lee Highway frontage in conjunction with street facing plaza - Materials - concrete</li> </ul>
<b>Picnic Shelters and Restrooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two smaller picnic shelter facing a plaza near existing location</li> <li>One small picnic shelter near skate park</li> <li>Restroom in conjunction with two shelters near plaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One large picnic shelter near existing location</li> <li>Three small picnic shelters added throughout Uplands</li> <li>Restroom near shelter at existing location</li> </ul>
<b>Court Sports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tennis Courts remain in place</li> <li>2 Volleyball Courts adjacent to tennis courts</li> <li>1 full Basketball Court remains in place</li> <li>½ Basketball Court adjacent to full basketball court</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tennis Courts remain in place</li> <li>2 Volleyball Courts remain in place</li> <li>1 full Basketball Court remains in place</li> <li>½ Basketball Court adj to playground at former parking</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconfigure parking in place, retain same number of parking spaces, add pervious pavers, stormwater infiltration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocate parking in two lots, expand amount of parking by 20-30 spaces, add pervious pavers, stormwater infiltration</li> </ul>
<b>Plazas and Gathering Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create formal plaza, gathering space in center of uplands adjacent to playground relocated on site of former parking lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create formal plaza along Old Lee Highway, integrate it with new skate park</li> </ul>
<b>Open Lawn Area for Informal Play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two defined areas on either side of playground (playground in existing location)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One area adjacent between volleyball and relocated parking area; another adjacent to tennis courts</li> </ul>
<b>The Bowl and Woodlands</b>		
<b>Open, Shady and Unstructured Play Areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No differences between Concepts 1 and 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain sledding hill, open bowl, small picnic shelter</li> <li>Adjust alignment, surfacing and create ADA accessible path to connect top and bottom of park, display garden along switch backs</li> <li>Address erosion issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain sledding hill, open bowl, small picnic shelter</li> <li>Adjust alignment, surfacing and create ADA accessible path to connect top and bottom of park, display garden along switch backs</li> <li>Address erosion issues</li> </ul>

	Concept 1 Points	Concept 2 Points
<b>The Stream Valley</b>		
<b>Living Learning Lab</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No differences between Concepts 1 and 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accotink Creek restoration</li> <li>Woodlands</li> <li>Paved trails, boardwalks, benches</li> <li>Improve accessibility</li> <li>Demonstrate stream restoration techniques</li> <li>Involve community and school children in restoration activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accotink Creek restoration</li> <li>Woodlands</li> <li>Paved trails, boardwalks, benches</li> <li>Improve accessibility</li> <li>Demonstrate stream restoration techniques</li> <li>Involve community and school children in restoration activities</li> </ul>
<b>Circulation</b>		
<b>Vehicular</b> Offset park improvements 40 feet from centerline of Old Lee Highway to protect space for future improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain two entrance drives: Park Entry drive adjacent to St. Leo's and Sherwood Center entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close park drive adjacent to St. Leo's; access park from Sherwood Center entry</li> </ul>
<b>Pedestrian Entrances and Path Network</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No differences between Concepts 1 and 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand pedestrian entrance from University Drive</li> <li>Create pedestrian entrance from Cornwall Road (path on back of St. Leo's athletic field)</li> <li>Enhance pedestrian entrance on Old Lee Highway</li> <li>Close two existing crosswalks</li> <li>Create mid-block crosswalk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand pedestrian entrance from University Drive</li> <li>Create pedestrian entrance from Cornwall Road (path on back of St. Leo's athletic field)</li> <li>Enhance pedestrian entrance on Old Lee Highway</li> <li>Close two existing crosswalks</li> <li>Create mid-block crosswalk</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a variety of experiences</li> <li>Public Art display</li> <li>Garden planting</li> <li>Soft trails</li> <li>Paved trails</li> <li>Boardwalks</li> <li>Address erosion and surface treatments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a variety of experiences</li> <li>Public Art display</li> <li>Garden planting</li> <li>Soft trails</li> <li>Paved trails</li> <li>Boardwalks</li> <li>Address erosion and surface treatments</li> </ul>

Concept 1 Alternative Diagram



Figure 41. May 18th Workshop- gathering feedback on concepts



Figure 42. May 18th Workshop- gathering feedback using qualitative photo boards



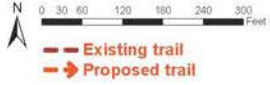
Figure 43. May 18th Workshop - gathering feedback using qualitative photo boards



# Van Dyck Park Master Plan

City of Fairfax  **50 & FORWARD**  
VAN DYCK PARK MASTER PLAN  
**CONCEPT 2**

Figure 44. Master Plan Concept 2





## ***Recommended Master Plan Concept***

Most attendees at the various meetings and respondents to the web postings supported Concept 2, or much of its organizational structure. Based on that direction, the recommended concept plan and its program features reflect much of Concept 2. Key recommendations drawn from Concept 2 include:

- Close the entry drive adjacent to St. Leo's Catholic Church; replace with a soft edge between the school and the park, trail and access drive for maintenance and emergencies only
- Establish the current entry for the Sherwood Center and Police Station as the entry to the park
- Add and reinforce pedestrian entries to the park; add signage, benches, banners and new entry signs
- Create a more urban public edge that extends the new streetscape concept for the corridor along Old Lee Highway to draw by-passers into the park
- Relocate and expand parking availability within the park
- Link to the larger city-wide trail network; create an accessible trail connecting the upper and lower sections of the park
- Work with other City agencies to restore the Accotink Creek within and on the edge of the park, capturing opportunities for environmental education, hands-on learning and nature play
- Protect and retain the sledding hills and the bowl as they are today
- Replace the skate park, relocate the basketball court and playground, protect the tennis courts and two of the three volleyball courts

Recommended Van Dyck Park Master Plan



Figure 45. Van Dyck Park Master Plan

## Program Elements - The Park as a Whole

### Vistas and Views

Plan recommendations respect the existing vistas within and into the park, keeping the view of bowl and woods from the higher elevations within the park. Many attendees at the workshops were unaware of the extent of the park, particularly the area not visible from Old Lee Highway. The plan makes two recommendations to improve this - opening the front of the park by removing the hedge and split rail fence and developing a more urban streetscape/plaza edge. Deep enough so that users do not feel that they are too close to the traffic, the plaza can become a community gathering and people watching spot. Filled with movable tables, public art, plants and trees to provide shade, it will serve as a grand and welcoming entry into the park for both the user and the passerby gazing quickly into the park.

Of equal importance is the opening up of the pedestrian entry at the pedestrian bridge off of University Drive. Currently, the entry does not provide a view or sight line into the park and the welcome sign is located on the far side of the creek behind vegetation. The intent of the plan is again to open up the views, and to pull neighbors and visitors into the park to explore and enjoy its resources.

### Circulation - Trails, Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Five pedestrian entrances are proposed for improved access to park trails and walkways. Three of the five formal pedestrian and bicycle entries are located on Old Lee Highway. In conjunction with plans for the Old Lee Highway corridor, consideration should be given to removing two of the existing crosswalks and replacing them with a new mid-block crosswalk sited with longer sight horizontal and vertical sight lines. An option would be to make use of a Hawk Ped signal or similar at that crosswalk.

A second formal entry along Old Lee Highway is at the location of the former entry drive which is to be removed and reconfigured as a more narrow paved path with emergency and maintenance vehicle access only. The third formal entry from Old Lee Highway is along the vehicle entry drive currently serving the Sherwood Center and Police Station.

The other two formal entries are on the other side of the park, one off of University Drive and a new one off of Cornwall Road. The existing pedestrian bridge entrance at University Drive is expanded with a welcome plaza, including benches, banners, plantings, and a park sign on the west side of Accotink Creek. A new pedestrian entrance with park signage is proposed at Cornwall Road to provide an official access point for neighborhoods and park-goers north and east of the park. Linked to the park with a soft trail to start, it formalizes the informal path across the church parking lot on park property.



Figure 46. Existing park entry drive to become a new pedestrian entrance



Figure 47. Paved asphalt trail

To Come:  
Coordination with Old Lee  
Highway Corridor plan (plaza  
recommendations/guiding  
principles)

Existing park trails should be widened to 10', milled, and repaved with asphalt, particularly those that are currently gravel, eroded, or steeply sloped. An ADA accessible paved switchback trail is proposed to connect upper and lower sections of the park. Terraces with special plantings and public art could be incorporated along the switchback trail. A new trail segment is recommended to link the new pedestrian entrance at Cornwall Road with the existing trail system, linking generally at the location of the tennis courts. The preliminary installation could be mulch, with the option to later pave with asphalt. New paved trails are proposed for the "Front Door," these are generally the walkways connecting the streetscape / plaza fronting Old Lee Highway with the 80-capacity picnic shelter, old park entrance drive, multi-age playground, and new parking.

The regional trail network should clearly tie into the park trail network - one option is to formally name and sign an alignment within the park as the Creek to Creek trail, linking the Daniel's Run trail system with Accotink Creek and beyond. Currently, no signage indicates such connections.



Figure 48. Existing parking

### Circulation - Vehicle Traffic and Parking

In support of the proposed master plan parking improvements, the existing drive to the Sherwood Center and Police Station should be shared as the new, single park entrance. A park sign and landscaped median should be incorporated at the intersection with Old Lee Highway.

The existing park entrance, located between St. Leo's School and the volleyball courts, is closed to normal vehicular traffic and becomes a new pedestrian entrance, limiting vehicular use to emergency and maintenance access only.

Two new parking lots, netting an additional 10 - 12 spaces, are proposed. A challenge in park and master planning is to determine how much is enough parking, avoiding the "parking the park" result where the park is filled with parking spaces, destroying the very environment desired. The decision during the planning process was made to slightly increase the number of available specific park spaces with the understanding that there most often is the opportunity to share parking with the Sherwood Center and the Police Station. The new locations will consolidate all parking along the new proposed park entrance (existing Sherwood Community Center and Police Station entrance), no longer inserting the parking area into the center of the park. The Sherwood Center currently has formal agreements with adjacent properties for shared parking, if it became necessary, the park could consider entering into a similar agreement. Shuttle services to off-site parking also offer an option, particularly for special events or large planned gatherings.



Figure 49. Example of permeable pavers in a parking lot at Riverside Park in Lynchburg, Virginia.

One proposed parking lot, with approximately 57 spaces, parallels the entrance drive to the east; the other, with approximately 42 spaces, would be sited to the northwest of the police station, just east of the sled hill.

Infiltration improvements such as permeable pavers, rain gardens, and planted medians with shade trees are recommended. Trees and shrubs will provide a buffer and visually screen parking from Old Lee Highway and other park features.

A crosswalk linking the park with the Sherwood Center, and bolstered with the addition of a raised, textured surface or “speed bump,” would function as a traffic calming and pedestrian safety measure. Plantings should be incorporated to emphasize a strong connection between the park and the Sherwood Center.

Long-term, there are ongoing discussions about the potential to deck the police parking lot, providing secure parking on the first floor for the police and public parking on the deck, both with a new access point to Layton Hall Road. Another potential under discussion is a co-development of a new community center with Fairfax County’s Willard Center. Assuming the program will require structured parking to support the project, spaces within the garage could be made available for park use on off-hours.

### Public Art

While public art comes in many forms and can be situated virtually anywhere, it is recommended that art installations be sited in accessible locations where it can be enjoyed by all members of the community.

Three such opportunity areas include the streetscape plaza where interactive or iconic pieces visible from Old Lee Highway would call attention to the park and its entrances; incorporation of public art within the playground; or along the serpentine sloped switch back trail linking the upper and lower sections of the park. Intended to be accessible, the trail could provide an interesting opportunity for a series or linear type of story-telling art. Additionally, park structures such as picnic shelters and interactive play components in the active core could function as artful gateway features visible from Old Lee Highway.

Public art can be used to create or enhance an experiential walk or trail through the park. The stream valley could be incorporated within the concept, reinforcing with art the sense of place that is already in development.

The City of Fairfax has developed Public Art Guidelines with the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts in 2015. The Public Art Master Plan references opportunities for public art incorporation within the overall site. There is a formal process established for selecting, procuring and siting public art in the public landscape in the City of Fairfax.

### Events

This master plan sets the stage for community events, with several unprogrammed open lawns and paved gathering areas. The streetscape



Figure 50. Bioretention or rain garden plantings in a parking lot



Figure 51. Playful public art- *Colour Pencils* by Jonna Phojalainen



Figure 52. Farmers' Market



Figure 53. Grid of shade trees at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, designed by Dan Kiley



Figure 54. Outdoor ping pong

plaza and adjacent free play lawn is ideal for programs including the Irish Festival, farmers markets, “Movies at the Park,” food trucks, and small music performances. When parking is not in demand, portions of the lots could support small activities at the “Front Door” of the park.

### Utilities and Infrastructure

Improvements such as restrooms will require public water and sewer service. There is a sewer trunk line in the lower elevation of the park, near Accotink Creek. For planning and cost estimating purposes, this plan assumes that the sewer line tie-in would be at this location. As planning efforts move forward, additional investigations should be made as to the feasibility of tying into the water and sewer sources currently serving the Sherwood Center and the Police Station.

## Program Elements - The Front Door

### Streetscape Plaza

An active, but largely unprogrammed paved streetscape plaza (approximately 10,500 square feet) is envisioned for the “Face of the Park” along Old Lee Highway. With transparent views into the park, activities at the playground, central picnic shelter, skatepark, volleyball and basketball courts will be framed by a grid of shade trees inside and outside of the paved plaza; the shade trees knit together the paved plaza with the skatepark and the free play lawn. The plaza will serve as an urban link to downtown, encouraging foot traffic between the two.

A social gathering area, the streetscape plaza will have cafe seating with umbrellas, drinking fountains, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, benches and/or seatwalls. Ample open space offers opportunities for installations of public art. Outdoor game tables such as ping pong could also be incorporated.

A curvilinear theme is proposed, as a gesture to and abstraction of the curving Accotink Creek along the northern park edge. Permeable pavers are recommended for the plaza, to support sustainable stormwater management efforts.

In anticipation of the future improvements in the Old Lee Highway corridor, park improvements other than the plaza/street scape are not proposed within 40 feet of the current center line of Old Lee Highway.

### Picnic Shelters

Located not far from the current Rotary Picnic Shelter, a new 80-person /10 picnic table capacity structure (approximately 1,850 square feet) with attached restroom is proposed. A two-stall, “family” restroom with sinks is recommended. A small plaza and grounds surrounding the large picnic shelter should include grills, drinking fountain, bike racks, and trash/recycling receptacles. The large picnic shelter should be available for reservation.

The architecture of the central, large picnic shelter should be designed to draw visitors into the park with a architecturally significant visual beacon located on its top - for example some form of a cupola could also serve as a natural ventilation system, a visual cue, a reflection of other beacons and steeples within the City and a ripe opportunity for the incorporation of public art.

Two small picnic shelters are proposed between the existing free play lawn and multi-age playground. These picnic shelters should hold five picnic tables (40-person capacity) and include grills, drinking fountain, trash/recycling receptacles. The small picnic shelters should not be available for reservation.

### Multi-age Playground

Multi-age play and fitness components are recommended for the 25,000 - 34,000 square foot playground planned at the location of the existing park parking lot. Play components are to primarily include natural play and imaginative play features and materials, such as boulders, ropes, Robinia (black locust), or other appropriate wood products. Shade elements should be included, with preference given to shade trees. The playground should not be bounded by a fence, but could have other barriers such as seat walls or vegetation. Public art or sculptural climbing features could be included. Adult fitness/play equipment should be incorporated in any configuration.

### Skate Plaza

Elements of the planned 7,000 square feet skate plaza should be integrated with the existing landscape and streetscape/plaza at the park's "Front Door," to encourage interconnectivity and multi-use open space. Concrete features are preferred and could be sculptural in nature. A variety of geometries and linear elements, as well as public art installations, should be considered.

### Tennis Courts

The four existing lighted tennis courts shall remain in place, with the option to paint lines for dual use as both tennis and pickle ball.

### Volleyball Courts

The northern-most volleyball court is to be removed to accommodate the new location of the multi-age playground and full and half basketball courts. Two volleyball courts will remain unchanged, with the exception of maintenance improvements.

### Basketball Courts

The existing full basketball court is to be demolished and replaced with a new full-size and a half-size court; both to be sited south of the multi-age playground.



Figure 55. Sculptural climbing features



Figure 56. Integrated skate plaza (credit: Spohn Ranch Skateparks)



Figure 57. Free play lawn at the "Bowl"

### Free Play Areas

One free play area is between the volleyball and relocated parking area; another is adjacent to the tennis courts. Combined both of these free play areas approximately 1.1 acres.

### Civic Green at Sherwood Center

One of the key moves of the Van Dyck Park Master Plan is to better connect the civic spaces that exist adjacent to each other on Old Lee Highway. The existing green with the gazebo and sculpture outside of the Sherwood Center provides a natural pedestrian connection into the heart of the upper level of the park. The plan indicates a widened crosswalk, potentially in the form of a raised crosswalk or speed table for traffic calming purposes to clearly indicate that the priority is given to the pedestrian in crossing the driveway.

Providing both physical and visual connections, the new and widened crosswalk connect the spaces rather than dividing them.

### Program Elements - The Bowl and Woodlands

#### The “Bowl” and Free Play Lawns

While the open “Bowl” lawn area (roughly 2.8 acres) is to remain unchanged, two new free play lawn areas, totaling approximately 1.1 acres, are proposed to the south and west of the new 80-capacity picnic shelter. The free play lawn to the north of the proposed multi-age playground (roughly .7 acres) will also remain unchanged.

#### Sledding Hills

Sledding hills remain unchanged in the master plan recommendations. A sled staging area is to be preserved southwest of the proposed parking area at the top of the hill.

#### New Plantings and Woodlands

As with Don Lederer’s 1967 plan, trees play an integral role in this master plan for the park. They are the bones and ligaments that integrate and link park features. A sweeping swath of new trees is proposed to link the existing woodlands, at the southwest corner of the Bowl, with the active core, or “Front Door” of the park. New trees should be sited according to use, but generally will progress from a “natural” arrangement to a more formal grid at the streetscape plaza.

The proposed active core of the park is framed by a grid of shade trees inside and outside of the paved streetscape plaza; the shade trees knit together the streetscape with the skate plaza and the free play lawn. New plantings in this Master Plan serve both aesthetic and functional purposes. For example, along the border between St. Leo’s School and the park, new plantings will provide an attractive soft screen defining the



Figure 58. Sledding hill to remain unchanged



boundary. Display gardens at the new park entrance will improve the appearance and emphasize its intersection at Old Lee Highway. Special plantings incorporated at the terraced ADA switchback trail will set the stage for public art. Bioretention areas in or near parking lots will be composed of both trees and shrubs providing shade, screening, and visual appeal.

With the new ADA switchback trail connections between the upper and lower levels of the park, as well as the new entrance at Cornwall Road, opportunities to introduce visitors to the natural woodland areas of the park will increase. New tree plantings or reforestation in the woodlands should be performed as part of the future Accotink Creek Stream Restoration effort.

## **Program Elements - The Stream Valley**

### **Stream Restoration/Living Learning Lab**

As part of the future Accotink Creek Stream Restoration, a parallel but separate effort addressing erosion, reforestation, and creek access, an ecological educational component or “Living Learning Lab” program should be implemented. This would include demonstrations of various stream restoration activities, such as step pools, rain gardens, or check dams, and could be incorporated through access to trails along the stream, boardwalks, and interpretive elements.

Tentative plans call for working on approximately 1,700 linear feet of the stream, with funding and direction given by Christina Alexander in the City of Fairfax’s Department of Public Works. As was done with the Daniel’s Run effort, there is an opportunity to again work in conjunction with Lands and Waters to implement the plan.

Important considerations for addressing stormwater needs in the park are included in the master plan and its recommendations for improvements.

The Master Plan should anticipate amount of ground disturbance anticipated through complete implementation of the master plan and provide suggestions for addressing that amount of disturbance.

- For example, via the parking lot relocation – incorporate stormwater treatment within the proposed foot print of the new parking area(s)
- The potential off-set for disturbed areas could incorporate improvements to existing pavement by replacing impervious surface with pervious surface and infiltration trenches
- Van Dyck Park is located within one watershed, so stormwater treatment anywhere within the park boundaries is acceptable (even if not directly tied to site of disturbance - i.e. the improvements to the existing parking lot could address the need for treatment created by a playground expansion)

### **Stormwater Regs (per 2014 State new regulations)**

- Triggered if more than 2,500 SF disturbed
- Must accommodate any changes made to park
- If one acre is disturbed, must treat one acre (VRRM)
- Activity in one sector of the park such as the playground renovation does NOT require that all features within the park come into compliance
- Appropriate to treat with pervious pavers, bioinfiltration systems, underground vaults
- City not enthusiastic regarding use of detention or retention ponds on site



Figure 59. Young researcher testing the water through an educational program at nearby Daniel’s Run (photo credit: Jeanette Stewart, Lands and Waters)

### **RPA Requirements and Encroachments**

- The City does not allow any sheds within the RPA; therefore, avoid any structures with roofs (or structures in general)
- Paved trails ARE allowed within the RPA
- Steps and hardscape can be incorporated in a paved trail system (for example, the trail could be widened and a bench incorporated to create a stopping point, or small gathering space)

### **FEMA/Flood Plain Concerns**

- Improvements should stay at existing grade level; if flood storage area is being displaced and/or base flood elevation being changed, will need to model and analyze impact on floodplain
- Could look to use of porous concrete for improvements and any structures (will need to ensure that Parks is comfortable with annual maintenance/vacuuming requirements)

### **Environmental Learning Area along Accotink Creek**

- Opportunity to provide a living learning laboratory for teaching residents in the community
- Use stream restoration process to demonstrate a number of progressive techniques and best management practices along section of stream within the park such as plunge pools/rocks/rain gardens
- Model on the successful public involvement of all grade level students at Daniel's Run Elementary work with stream restoration and replanting in that park
- If and when Accotink Creek is restored in that section, work will require removal of large trees – replanting could be a school and/or community effort

### **Guidelines for Stream Restoration Work in Van Dyck Park**

The restoration of the Accotink Creek stream segment on the park's boundary will greatly enhance opportunities for environmental learning, increase passive recreation space while adding native vegetation and improving the site's habitat offerings. The stream restoration work will most likely be undertaken by a different City department under a separate contract from any other park improvements proposed. Given that, it is important to establish basic guidelines to guide the discussion and outcome of that work and to ensure that the changes made are in concert with the tenants of this Van Dyck Master Plan.

- Save mature trees
- Use the sewer line easement or stream for construction access
- Integrate educational components with stream restoration
- University Drive pedestrian entrance improvements and expansion to include seating area and new sign to be coordinated with design and construction of stream restoration improvements (entry area can serve as gathering space for classes and groups visiting the stream and the Living Learning Lab)

### **Implementation**

The Van Dyck Park Master Plan proposes a number of capital improvements to the park. Given the scale of the proposals, it is most likely that the City will consider using bond funding to pay for the majority of the improvements. There are some early action projects that may be funded from the City's Capital Improvement Plan and constructed prior to any bond funded activities. If such early action projects are undertaken, it is key to select features that can be built and will not adversely affect or be affected by the incorporation of other future activities.

## Priority Projects for Early Implementation

Potential early action projects include:

- Skate park relocation and replacement into a skate plaza
- Pedestrian entrance at University Drive - renovate in conjunction with the Accotink Creek stream restoration to create a more welcoming entrance and gathering area for educational activities focused on the stream and the Living Learning Lab
- Cornwall Road pedestrian entrance construction, establish an initial trail with mulch to create public pedestrian connection between the park and Cornwall Road
- Accessible trail between lower and upper portions of the park
- New picnic shelter and public restrooms

## Cost Estimate

A copy of the Draft Master Plan Cost Estimate is included in the Appendix of this document.

## Plan Approval Process

The Van Dyck Master Plan should be presented for City Council's approval.

## Potential Funding Tools

### General Obligation Bonds

- Require Voter referendum
- No Collateral required
- Can be expensive
- Can be voted down
- Bond term can range

### Lease Financing

- Use city property as collateral
- No voter referendum
- Lease park to bank and they lease depending on amount borrowed
- Normally based on the life of the work being done

### Lease Financing through the Economic Development Authority

- Better terms and interest rates
- Secured by EDA property
- Banks more inclined to working with EDAs

### Regular CIP

- Budgeted annually
- Need for phasing yearly
- Draws out construction over a long period of time
- Pay as you go
- Creates disruption at park possibly for years

### Find a Benefactor

- Realistic for portions of improvements or specific improvements but not overall improvements

### Grants

- Available for specific portions - streams, road and access improvements, etc.

### Citizens Advisory Referendum for Special Tax

- Non-binding referendum for specific additional tax to make improvements
- A start and sunset date built in with specific amounts
- Used for open space acquisition and improvements 2002-2010
- Sometimes does not cover actual improvement cost and funds still need to be borrowed
- Can be used in combination with lease financing

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# Appendices

## **Appendix A. Public Engagement**

Compilation of meeting notes, presentations, comments, on-line survey

- Advisory Group Meetings - 4 total
- Community Workshops - 2 total to date
- Stakeholder List
- On-line Survey results

## **Appendix B. Cost Estimate**

- *Draft Master Plan Cost Estimate for Van Dyck Park, August 2017*

## **Appendix C. Park History**

- History of E. Calvin Van Dyck Park Master Plan, Donald F. Lederer, FASLA, March 2008
- Land Trade Documents (St. Leo's Catholic Church and City of Fairfax)
- 

## **Appendix D. Skate Park**

- Design proposal submitted by skaters
- Criteria, sizing and costing information provided by Spohn Ranch

## **Appendix E. Excerpts from 2014 Strategic Plan**

- Page C-83 from 2014 Plan Appendix - Qualitative Site Assessment of Van Dyck Park

## **Appendix F. Plan Formulation Documents**

- CAD file for sizing for Master Plan proposals
- Parking count at Sherwood Center and Police Station

