50 & FORWARD
VAN DYCK PARK MASTER PLAN

City of Fairfax, Virginia

FINAL DRAFT | JANUARY 2018

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to the residents of the City of Fairfax for their participation.

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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 in support of the illustrated Van Dyck Park Master Plan on page 38. 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 sign at the Sherwood Center entrance on Old Lee Highway

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, a place that serves as the communal living room and backyard for the residents of the City of Fairfax.

Surprisingly, much of the 36-acre park is unknown by members of the community. The active core of the park—the playground, volleyball courts, picnic pavilion, and skatepark—is visible from Old Lee Highway, but other park assets, its woods and trails, the stream valley, tennis courts, and open play area are not as visible or as well known. New and expanded pedestrian and vehicular entrances will make these resources more visible to the community through the preservation and expansion of vistas and welcoming entry points.

There are no plans to radically change the park or its current uses. The park is heavily used and much appreciated by community members. Although the master plan does recommend upgraded equipment and reconfiguration of some areas within the park, the sledding hills and the recently designated Armistice Turtora Bowl remain untouched. The woods at the base of the park near University Drive are protected and managed. Improvements are recommended to address missing or aging infrastructure such as the lack of permanent restrooms and aging physical fitness and playground equipment, and skatepark equipment. Additional features such as signs and wayfinding are also included in the plan's recommendations.

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 park in the City's open space
- Integrate uses with a clear concept that engages park visitors and creates ownership by the community
- Provide areas for multi-generational play and recreation
- Employ an active and engaging public outreach
- Create a master plan that supports efficient operations and maintenance practices
- Coordinate with the Sherwood Center/Willard Center Master Plan process

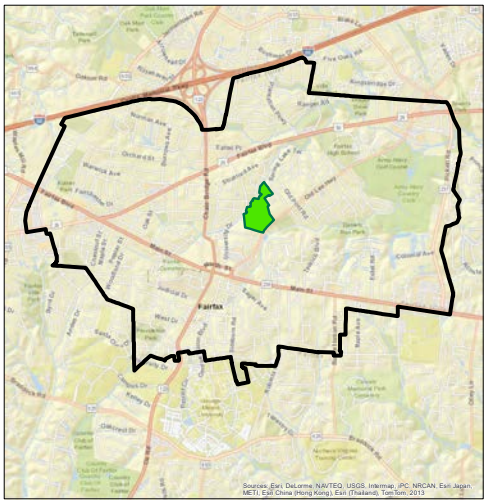


Figure 2. Context map

Figure 3. Parcel map

Project Description

Van Dyck Park, located at 3720 Old Lee Highway, is the crown jewel park in the City of Fairfax, Virginia. It is one of its most frequently visited community parks and is the premier park site in the city.

The City of Fairfax celebrated the park's 50th birthday in 2017. 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[1] total approximately 36 acres[2] and include wooded natural areas and stream corridor, athletic fields, grassy open spaces with varied topography, trails, picnic areas and picnic shelters, skatepark, parking, a community center, and police station.

A land trade in 1968 between the City of Fairfax and St. Leo the Great Catholic Church changed the park's configuration and provided space for the expansion of St. Leo the Great Catholic 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 the Great Catholic Church. The larger parcel now forms the northwestern, wooded corner of the park adjacent to Cornwall Road, and provides access to the park from Country Club Hills and Lord Fairfax Estates.

While the bones of the 1967 plan designed by resident landscape

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 the Great Catholic Church

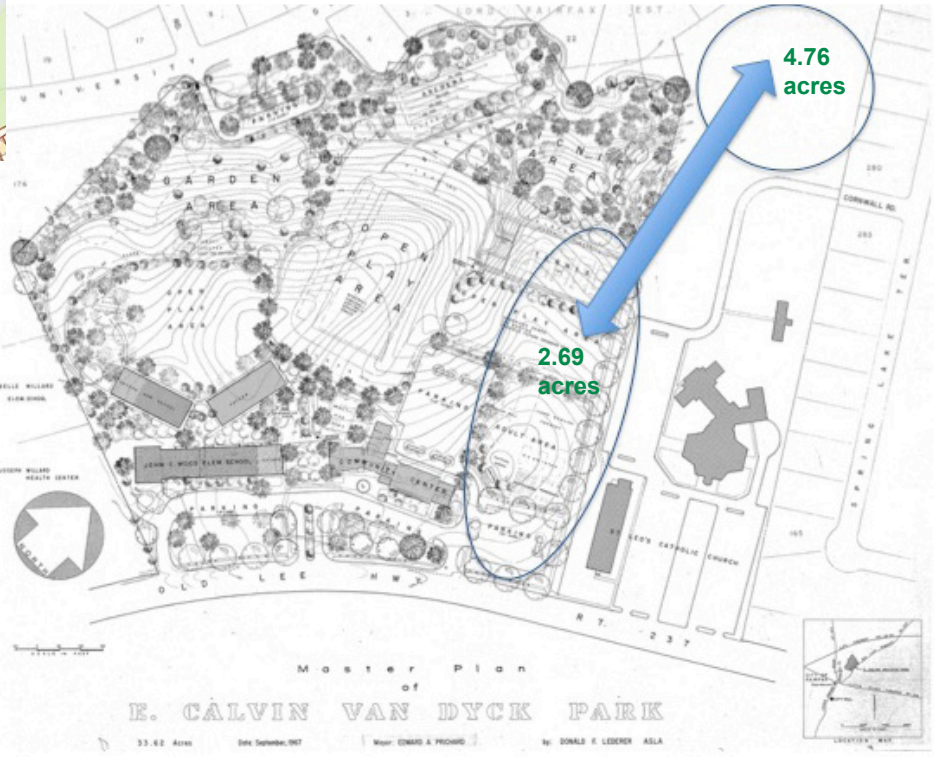


Figure 4. 1967 park plan by Donald F. Lederer; blue arrow indicates parcels exchanged in 1968 land trade

architect, Donald F. Lederer, are still intact, the City of Fairfax's population has grown significantly and recognizes that park facilities are outdated, elements are failing and need replacement, and the grounds are in need of substantial updating and redevelopment. Figure 4 on page 2 indicates Mr. Lederer's original intent for the park. The blue arrows on the illustration indicate the parcels subject to the land exchange.

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. Once home to the beloved airplane adjacent to the park's playground as seen in the upper edge of Figure 7 in a photo from the 1970s, the park remains a treasured resource in the city.

Figure 5. The Armistice Turtora Bowl

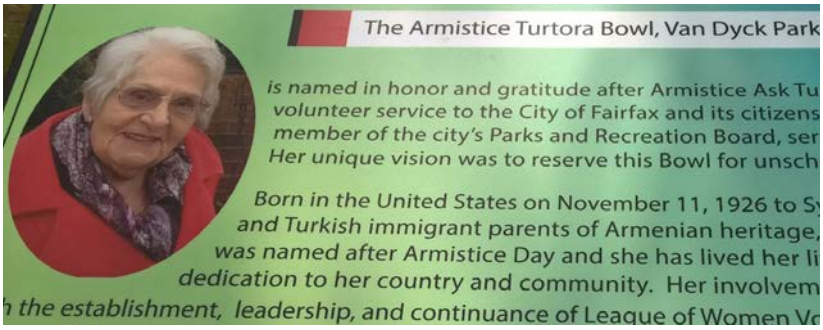


Figure 6. Excerpt from interpretive sign located at the edge of the bowl, honoring Armistice Turtora, pictured

Figure 7. *Leisure Times* cover, featuring images of Van Dyck Park taken in the 1970s, including the Van Dyck Park's beloved airplane - upper left

Community Park Definition[1]

Van Dyck Park is a 'Community Park'

- Typical Size - 10-50+ acres
- Service Area: 1 - 2-mile service radius (5 minute drive) to serve several neighborhoods with populations up to 20,000+
- Typical facilities can 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.

1 Appendix C of Strategic Plan

Related Studies and 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 of Fairfax's 2014 Strategic Master Plan reinforced the demand for improvements at Van Dyck Park. The 2014 Strategic Master Plan established the framework for this park master plan, with the purpose of providing the city a road map as to how best to incorporate and implement necessary infrastructure improvements and to allow the city to better accommodate the current and future use of the park. The 2014 Strategic Master Plan's Action Plan's strategies that relate to Van Dyck Park are highlighted on the following page. The Van Dyck Park Master Plan plan further elaborates on how these strategies are addressed and incorporated within the park.

Current demographic studies indicate that the population of the City of Fairfax 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 is an attractive place to live, drawing young families and students, and maintains a large population of seniors.[3] Focal priorities outlined in the 2014 Strategic Master Plan's recommendations for incorporation within Van Dyck Park include:

- Meeting the city's evolving programmatic needs with shifting age demographics
- Replacement of aging equipment, including the skatepark
- Addition of park restroom facilities
- Improvement of 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

3 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

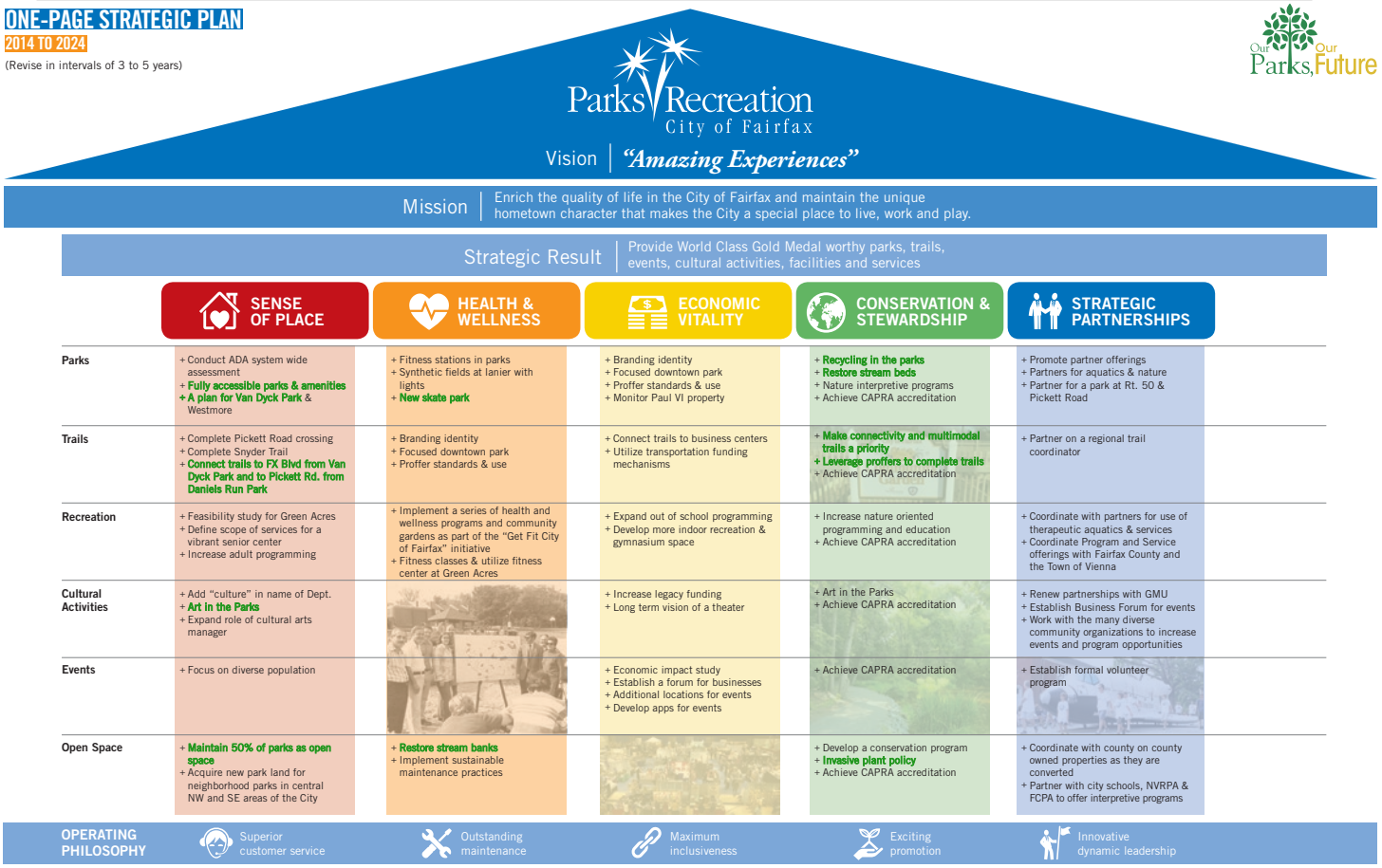


Figure 8. One-page summary of the 2014 Strategic Master Plan, actions related to Van Dyck Park highlighted in green type

City of Fairfax Strategic Master Plan
Action Plan Strategies Excerpts as Related to Van Dyck Park[1]

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 serves 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 Boulevard

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

Figure 9. Stretch of Accotink Creek along border of 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, within the larger Potomac-Shenandoah Watershed. Approximately ten miles of stream channel exist within the City of Fairfax, with Accotink Creek serving as the major drainage body[4]. A portion of the southern reach tributary of Accotink Creek flows in a northeast direction along the entire northern edge of Van Dyck Park.

Rummel, Klepper & Kahl (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[5]. RK&K's report (published in 2008) recommended that the Lower Jean Street (SR3-002) segment, abutting the northern 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. In 2017, stream conditions remain degraded in this segment.

The stream reaches on either side of the lower Jean Street segment have been restored as part of the City of Fairfax's ongoing stream restoration work that has taken place continuously since the mid-1990s.

Old Lee Highway Multi-modal Improvements, 2017

A current study by the city and Rinker Design Associates—the Old Lee Highway Great Street Conceptual Plan—is examining the Old Lee Highway corridor, focusing on potential improvements within the public right-of-way. The Great Street plan and past studies have made a variety of improvement recommendations in this corridor to accommodate multi-modal transit. Although incomplete at the time of this plan, coordination with city staff has been undertaken and the park master plan incorporates an appropriate setback from the center line of the road's current geometric configuration so that any future right-of-way improvements will not adversely affect the park, or vice versa.

4 *Accotink Creek Stream Stability Assessment and Prioritization Plan Supplemental Report for Daniels Run,* City of Fairfax, Virginia, October 14, 2008, Rummel, Klepper & Kahl, LLP.

5 Ibid.

Community Center Study, 2017

Concurrently with the Van Dyck Park Master Plan process, City Council directed staff to examine three sites within the city boundaries to replace the Green Acres Senior Center and Fitness Center with a new 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, City Hall, and Providence Park. Volkert performed the work as a consultant to the City of Fairfax.

One of the outcomes of this exploration is the opportunity for the City of Fairfax to look at co-locating this facility with the redevelopment of the Fairfax County Willard Center, located at the intersection of Old Lee Highway and Layton Hall Drive. A co-location approach would benefit Van Dyck Park by potentially providing public vehicular and pedestrian access to Layton Hall Road and the traffic signal at Old Lee Highway, and a shared garage and additional surface parking. An expanded Sherwood Center facility would provide opportunities for enhanced recreational and cultural activities, with potential incorporation of the resources at Van Dyck Park.

Figure 10. Sketch plan alternatives for a potential community center location and configuration in or adjacent to Van Dyck Park, Volkert, Spring 2017

Master Planning Schedule

Winter 2017

- Site survey, site assessment, and initial analysis completed

Spring 2017

- Formulate vision, objectives and goals, concepts
- **Advisory Group Meeting 1** March 22: *Project Introduction*
- Online Survey posted March 1
- **Community Workshop 1** April 6: *Issues and Opportunities Identification*
- **Advisory Group Meeting 2** April 11: *Draft Vision, Principles, Park Programming*
- **Advisory Group Meeting 3** May 11: *Draft Concept Alternatives*
- **Community Workshop 2** May 18: *Concept Alternatives*

Summer 2017

- **Advisory Group Meeting 4** June 29: *Draft Master Plan*

Fall 2017

- Draft master plan document
- **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)** September 14: *Draft Master Plan*
- **City Council Work Session** October 24: *Draft Master Plan*
- **Community Open House** December 4: *Draft Master Plan*

Winter 2018

- **Advisory Group Meeting 5** January 9: *Final Draft Master Plan*
- **PRAB** - January 11: *Final Draft Master Plan*
- **City Council Van Dyck Master Plan Adoption**

Public Process

As called for in the 2014 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 five times over the course of the planning effort. Two community workshops were held in the Spring of 2017 and an open house held in December. All three meetings were widely publicized and well attended. An online survey posted on the City of Fairfax's Van Dyck Park website ran over three months in the Spring of 2017 and received more than 900 responses. Additionally, the project schedule and meeting documents were made available to the public on the City's Van Dyck Park web page.

Brochures 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. The cover of the Summer 2017 issue of *Leisure Times* highlighted the development of the Master Plan for Van Dyck Park.

City of Fairfax staff, Van Dyck Park Master Plan Advisory Group (Advisory Group) members, and representatives of the City of Fairfax's Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) were available to speak with Homeowners Associations, Civic Groups, and any other interested parties. A list of outreach contacts is included Appendix A of this document. More than twenty-five stakeholder groups were contacted, including nearby schools and faith-based communities, home owner associations, sports groups, boards and commissions, and specific user groups.

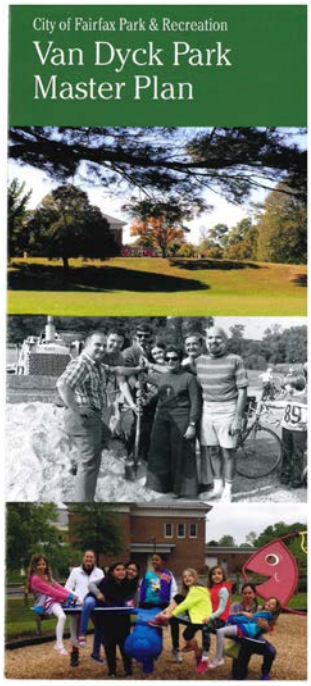


Figure 11. Brochure and flyer developed to inform the public of the Van Dyck master planning process

Advisory Group

The city formally invited and established a six 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 five 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 first four meetings are provided in Appendix A.

Community Workshops and Open House

Two evening community workshops and an open house were held at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center. Detailed notes and information on the workshops and the open house can be found in Appendix A 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

More than 60 people attended the April meeting to learn about the master planning process for Van Dyck Park. Following a review of the identified park issues and opportunities, smaller discussion groups further defined the issues and opportunities. Each group was given pieces of paper cut in the shape and scale of potential park features and a base map of the park. Encouraged to select features and locate them as desired, the paper puzzle pieces prompted group discussions related to the park and the many potential configurations future development and redevelopment of the park could take. This was similar to an earlier exercise used in the development of the

Figure 12. Community workshop 1 discussion

Sample Responses Community Workshop 1

Question 1 - What is your favorite memory of Van Dyck Park?

- 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 - Who is missing from the park?

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

Question 3 - What is the park's most pressing need?

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

Sample Responses Community Workshop 2

Concept Alternative 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 skatepark location
- Support half-court basketball
- Like switchback trails

Concept Alternative 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 areas
- Create small welcome plaza at University Drive
- Add a hockey/inline hockey rink
- Keep the skatepark
- Keep the skatepark 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

2014 Strategic Plan, where Van Dyck Park served as a study site. Additional group discussions were prompted by a series of questions which included:

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

May 2017 Community Workshop 2

More than 35 people attended the second community workshop to review concept alternatives developed for the park. Attendees were encouraged to mark up displays with dots, indicate which images of the park features 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.

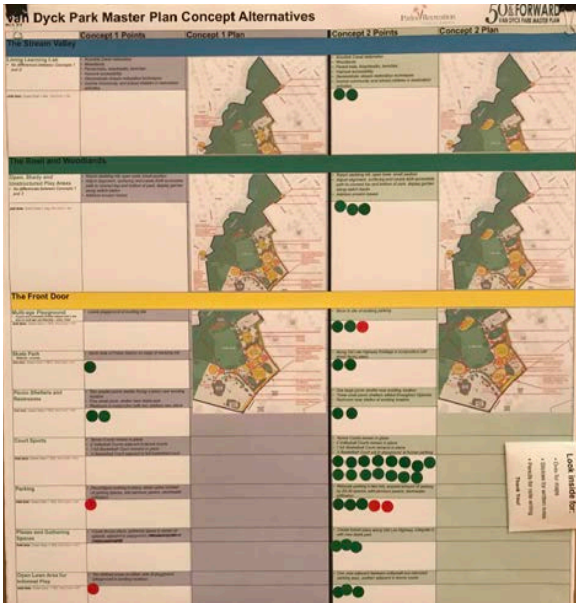


Figure 13. Interactive 'dot' exercise reviewing the concept alternatives

Figure 14. Collecting comments at community workshop 2

Community Open House

The proposed master plan was shared with the community in early December 2017. Attendees had the opportunity to view the plan diagram, the cost estimate, and the plan document. Comments were collected in person and on paper.

Surveys

In addition to the public workshops, the City of Fairfax created a survey through Survey Monkey® as a method to gather public feedback on Van Dyck Park. The survey was made available to the public through a link on the City of Fairfax's official Van Dyck Park planning process website from March to June 2017. More than 900 surveys were completed. The final survey results are included in Appendix A.

An earlier survey, part of the 2014 Strategic Master Plan, served as a model for some of the Van Dyck Park Master Plan survey questions, particularly for the portions of the 2014 project that focused on Van Dyck Park.

The 2017 Van Dyck Park Master Plan survey focused specifically on Van Dyck Park and its needs. Comparing the results from the 2014 and the 2017 surveys, a number of similar findings were noted. Each survey received responses strongly supporting better and more permanent restroom facilities in the park. The issue was ranked second in priority in 2014, and first in 2017. Each of the survey responses expressed a desire for a water feature in Van Dyck Park, with it being first in priority in 2014 while slightly lower in 2017. The lower priority in 2017 may be due to the recent installation of a water feature in downtown. Other responses were similarly

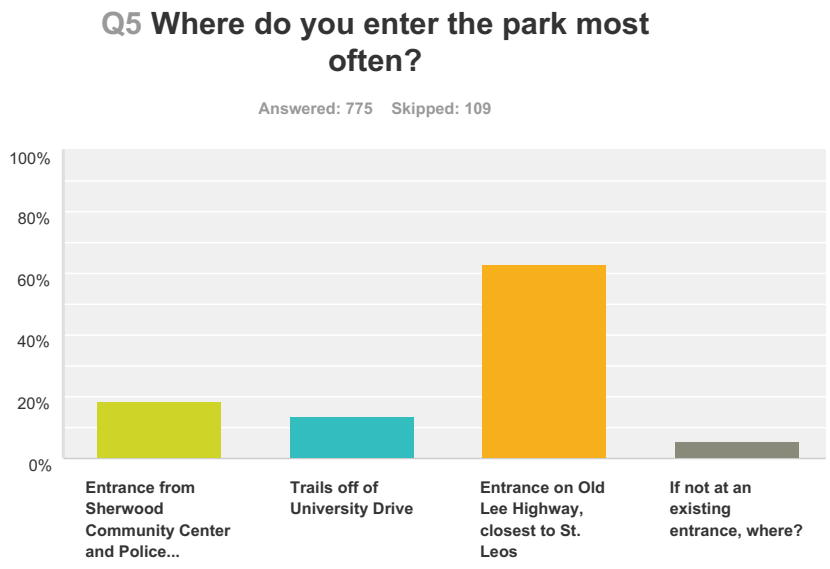


Figure 15. Van Dyck Park Master Plan online survey excerpt, April 2017

2014 Strategic Master Plan Survey[1] - top ten responses regarding Van Dyck Park

- Water spray/fountain play area (56 points[2])
- Better bathroom facilities (45)
- Add real bike paths to the park (37)
- Improve the skatepark (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)

2017 Van Dyck Master Plan Survey[3]

- Permanent Restrooms (added) (513 votes)
- Playground (443)
- Walking Trails (443)
- 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)
- Sledding Hill (183)
- Public Art (added) (152
- Stream (128)

1 Top ten responses received to improve Van Dyck Park
2 Votes were measured as 'points'
3 Listed elements each received more than 100 votes, numerous additional elements not noted; blue type indicates existing park feature

Figure 16. Sledding hill area, behind Police Station

ranked in 2014 and 2017, both surveys placing a high priority on playgrounds, skatepark improvements, trails and bike paths, picnic facilities, woodlands and forested areas, protected yet accessible, and shade structures.

Adjacent Property Owners

St. Leo the Great Catholic Church borders most of the southeastern side of the park property. A meeting was held with representatives of the church to discuss the planning process. Concerns such as the need to provide a safe and secure campus for the school's students and access for the students to the park were raised. It was agreed that an informal delineation of the boundaries between the school and the park through the use of informal plantings would be included in the master plan. A new pedestrian trail located in the park and connecting the park with Cornwall Drive and surrounding neighborhood will replace the informal park access through the church's parking lot.

Site Assessment

Context and Setting

Van Dyck Park is a large, centrally located open space in the city of Fairfax, within walking distance of downtown Fairfax and less than a mile from Old Town Square and Old Town Hall. The park serves as a gateway for travelers heading towards Old Town Fairfax on Old Lee Highway, given its close proximity to downtown.

The City of Fairfax bought the future Van Dyck site from William and Barbara Scott, who were the owners of Blenheim. Mrs. Scott inherited all of the property on the west side of Old Lee Highway from her family. At one time it was a dairy farm, but following the sale of the majority of the property for the development of County Club Hills, there is no evidence that the land continued to be farmed. A 1967 report on the site, written a few months after the city acquired the site, noted that the entire area is almost completely covered with grass and scrub green.[6]

Park Acreage In 2017		
Total Park Acres	36	36
Acres regulated as Resource Protection Area (RPA) 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%

The landscape and character of Van Dyck Park generally falls into three types of parklands. The lower elevations are heavily treed along Accotink Creek and University Drive, an area of the park that is riddled with hard and soft trails, and is frequently used by dog walkers, runners, and people escaping the surrounding urban environment.

The mid-section of the park includes large open grassy areas. These areas, found in other portions of the park as well, invite park users to use their imagination and dream, develop their own style of play,

6 Eric Forman, City of Fairfax Community Development & Planning email

read or relax. The mid-section of the park is the location of 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, skatepark, 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.

The park is also the foreground for surrounding community and public buildings, including the Police Station, the Sherwood Community Center, St. Leo the Great Catholic Church and School, the Fairfax Peace Church, and the Christian Science Church.

Topographic Features

The natural character and topography of the park land in the north and west sections of the park contrasts with the level, developed character of the park to the south and east along Old Lee Highway. A prominent topographic depression is centrally located in the park. Recently dedicated as the Armistice Turtora Bowl, its base is level and approximately the size of a regulation soccer field, although this reference is only for scaling purposes—organized athletics are not permitted within the park. To the north and west of the bowl, along the entirety of the park's north and western border, the topography slopes steeply toward 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.

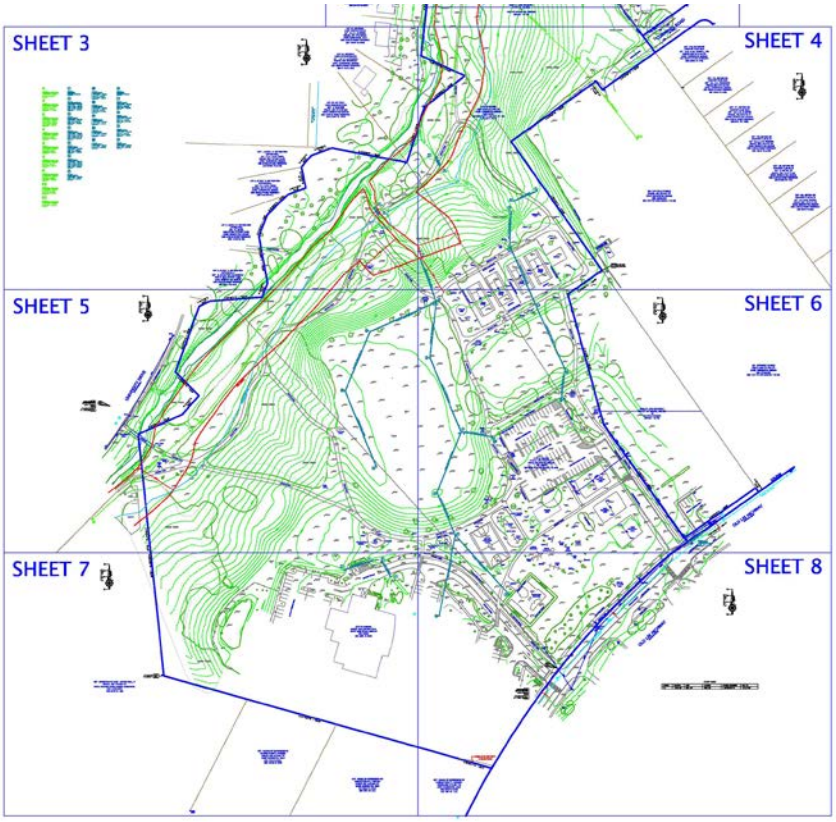


Figure 17. Park survey, 2017

The City of Fairfax is located on a prominent regional drainage divide. The headwaters of the Accotink Creek are here, and run along the edge of the park. Accotink Creek, a degraded stream moving through an urban area, dumps silt downstream into Lake Accotink every year. Improvements to this segment of the stream corridor within the park boundary, as outlined in the 2008 study written by RK&K, should be made in tandem with improvements recommended by the Van Dyck Park Master Plan.

Figure 18. Surface runoff from existing parking lot

Dominion Surveyors, Inc. completed a site survey for the park in the spring of 2017. Key components included in the survey are topographic contours, site utilities, structures, playground equipment, sidewalks, trees, property boundaries, and other relevant infrastructure. A full copy of the survey is included in Appendix G.

A large area of the park's acreage is pervious and undeveloped, with surface areas of lawn, woodlands, and planted display gardens. None of the current hard-surface areas within the park are designed to be pervious by making use of materials such as porous pavers or permeable pavement materials such as porous concrete or asphalt. Non pervious hard-surfaces are referred to as being impervious. Other impervious surfaces in the park include building roofs, picnic shelters, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, skatepark surfacing, and basketball and tennis courts. The existing impervious surfaces could, in places, be replaced with pervious, stable surface materials under the guidance of the master plan implementation.

Pervious surfaces benefit the water system by providing opportunities for rainwater and storm runoff to infiltrate into the soil on-site, potentially reducing erosion while recharging the groundwater table. Runoff from impervious surfaces must be managed with stormwater measures that reduce concentration and erosion. By reducing run-off through stormwater management best practices at higher elevations within the park, erosion issues throughout the park can be reduced considerably.

Source: City of Fairfax www.fairfaxva.gov; accessed 12/18/17 (Van Dyck Park boundary from City of Fairfax GIS data; Parks_Poly.shp)

Figure 19. City of Fairfax Zoning Map excerpt

Regulatory Framework

Zoning

As is illustrated in the zoning map excerpt, the parkland is zoned for residential use, as is much of the surrounding land. Van Dyck Park is zoned Residential Medium (RM) and is bounded by single-family residential properties predominantly to the north and northwest. St. Leo the Great Catholic Church is the park's neighbor on the east, and Fairfax Peace Church (formerly the Northern Virginia Mennonite Church) 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 the Great Church, southeast of the park, across Old Lee Highway.

Accotink Creek Stream Valley

Accotink Creek is buffered by a regulatory Resource Protection Area (RPA), an area defined in the City of Fairfax's Zoning Code. The stream is an unsung ecological component of the park that can be better integrated as part of the Van Dyck park experience. The RK&K 2008 stream assessment study identifies recommendations for stream restoration practices in this stream.

The paths near the stream frequently washout and erode. Recent park operation activities added stone rip-rap to several drainage areas below the storm sewer outfall and on both sides of the path segments that have experienced recent flooding events. There are two such 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.

Views and Vistas

Repeatedly, park visitors said that views and vistas into and within the park were critical to retain and to enhance. Vistas into the park, particularly along Old Lee Highway looking towards the active core, are key visual qualities to protect and to improve in order to attract and invite passerbys into the park.

Views within the park are equally important. Many attendees at the community workshops appreciated the park's clear sight lines between the parking lot, playground, and large picnic shelter. Long views across the bowl from multiple points are also cherished.

Circulation

Trails, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Access

The City of Fairfax has an extensive trail network. Van Dyck Park is located at the intersection of several trails, providing links between trails along Daniel's Run and to the west on Kenmore Drive. Clear signage and trail markers are needed to better orient trail users.

The 2014 Strategic Plan calls for renovation of the 1.23 miles of trail within Van Dyck Park. A network of trails criss-crosses the park, paved with a variety of materials. Some of the trail surfaces are not appropriate for steep terrain, eroding and washing away during intense storm events. Trail slopes generally are in conformance with accessibility standards, but there are trail sections not in compliance.

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 within the floodplain should stay at existing grade level; if a flood storage area is being displaced and/or base flood elevation being changed, the impact on the floodplain will need to modeled and analyzed
- 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)

Stormwater Regulations

(per 2014 State new regulations)

- Triggered if more than 2,500 square feet of ground disturbance
- 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 20. Park entry off University Drive

Figure 21. Park entry off Old Lee Highway

Figure 22. Park entry at the Sherwood Center

A formal accessibility study was not completed for this project, assessment is from visual observation only. There is not an accessible trail link connecting the lower and upper portions of the park. Many of the existing trails are deteriorating due to erosion on steep slopes, inadequate subgrades, 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 serve the park's pedestrian and bicycle users. The City of Fairfax is currently reviewing the 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 a forty-foot setback from the current Old Lee Highway centerline is adequate for any corridor improvements.

Formally identified park pedestrian entrances are located off of University Drive via a pedestrian 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 pedestrian 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 pedestrian access occurs via the St. Leo the Great Catholic Church's parking lot, connecting the Cornwall Road neighborhood with the park.

Vehicle Traffic

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 at one of the crosswalks, 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 park's primary entrance drive, adjacent to St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, terminates at the park's single parking lot. The second vehicular entry to the park shares the drive with the Stacey C. Sherwood Community Center (Sherwood Center) and the City of Fairfax Police Station (Police Station).

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 the Great Catholic School.

Parking

Assessing the appropriateness of the number of parking spaces provided is difficult, as there is no collected data on parking use or on the demand for parking within the park other then anecdotal and visual observation. Parking pressures increase on nice days when the Sherwood Center is fully programmed or hosting special activities, leaving no overflow parking for either use. To address parking needs for special events, the Sherwood Center has formal and informal shared parking agreements in place with Fairfax County's Willard Center and the Fairfax Peace Church. The park currently does not have any similar agreement. There are no permanent bike racks.

Figure 23. Existing parking lot within the park

The location of the current park parking lot bisects the park and creates a barrier and potential hazard for pedestrian movement between the upper area of the park where the playground and skatepark are located and the lower, more undeveloped area of the park and the tennis courts. The existing parking lot provides 87 parking spaces for park use—four of which are ADA accessible. The second vehicular entrance, serving the Sherwood Center and Police Station, provides access to an additional 82 public parking spaces, which includes 9 ADA spaces.

Vegetation

While extensive assessment of the existing vegetation was not performed, it is clear that ornamental trees and shrubs have been incrementally planted in the park over many 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 adjacent to the park entry signs and planted as hedges near the skatepark.

Figure 24. Open lawn and play area

Some of the trees originating from Landscape Architect Donald F. Lederer's 1967 plan recommendations 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 the Great Catholic 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 surround the bowl and open grassy area between the tennis courts and parking lot. Woodlands characterize the stream corridor at the north of the park, suggesting a natural landscape, although much of the native landscape has been encroached upon by non-native invasives.

Figure 25. Existing woodlands and meadow

Non-native invasive species are found throughout the park, as is common in urban and suburban areas. The forest understory in the park contains a significant amount of non-native invasive plants, defined as exotic plant species that were "*intentionally or*

Figure 26. Non-native invasive vines smothering trees and shrubs

accidentally introduced by human activity into a region in which they did not evolve and cause harm to natural resources, economic activity or humans.[7]" Non-native invasive species are also found in other areas of the park, but are better contained by mowing and other landscape practices.

Memorial trees are planted in several locations in the park. The City of Fairfax has an adopted policy governing the naming and/or placement of memorial or recognition plaques dated 3/09/93. It states:

> "*The placement of a plaque or other forms of personal recognition for the donation of items for placement or planting in public facilities or on public land may be permitted. All requests must be approved by the City Council, through resolution. The resolution confirming such approval should also contain any restrictions or obligations related to the maintenance, replacement and care of the donated item.*"

The adopted policy does not address the length of the life of the memorial or replacement policy. Other park memorials include the bowl and individual benches.

Public Art

A piece of public art is located adjacent to the park in the green near the gazebo, in front of the Sherwood Center. Although plans call for the installation of public art in Van Dyck Park, there is none to date.

Events

Van Dyck Park is primarily used for informal recreation, while occasionally it is used for special events, rallies, or running races. Organized sports activities are not allowed on the open field or grassy areas. The City of Fairfax's current policy is to not permit the rental of the entire park for events. Picnic shelters are the only reservable feature within the park.

The primary purpose of the park is to serve as an informal community gathering and recreational area for city residents. It is the least scheduled park in the city's system and when special events do rarely occur, they are intentionally not scheduled simultaneously when events or peak activities are also taking place at the Sherwood Center.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Current utility infrastructure in the park is limited to minimal electrical and public water service. There is no public sewer

7 Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspinfo. Website accessed 10/19/17.

serving any facility in the park. Public water and public sewer lines are mapped on the City of Fairfax's GIS data layers. No similar information is available for gas, cable, telephone, or electricity. A site and topographic survey was performed as a part of this plan development that identifies the location of some utilities, but not size or capacity. A copy is included in Appendix G.

Electric Service

There is existing overhead electric service in the park, connecting the source on Old Lee Highway to a pole light located between the basketball court and the playground; tennis courts are also lighted. The City of Fairfax's GIS mapping data does not indicate electrical or gas service. Poles are located on the survey work completed for this plan, but no source, tap location, or available service is noted. Any additional electrical information for this project is drawn from visual observation and should be field checked prior to any site plan development.

Water Service

Main water lines are located along Old Lee Highway and Layton Hall Road, with service for the Sherwood Center and the drinking fountain drawn from the lines in Old Lee Highway. A single water line serves Van Dyke Park's two drinking fountains located near the existing picnic shelter and playground.

Figure 27. One of two drinking fountains in Van Dyck Park

Pipe sizes and capacities were not mapped or evaluated in the site survey. Because of this, cost estimates for park improvements assume a worst case scenario.

Sewer Service

Van Dyck Park is not served by permanent restrooms, although the public may use the indoor restrooms available at the Sherwood Center

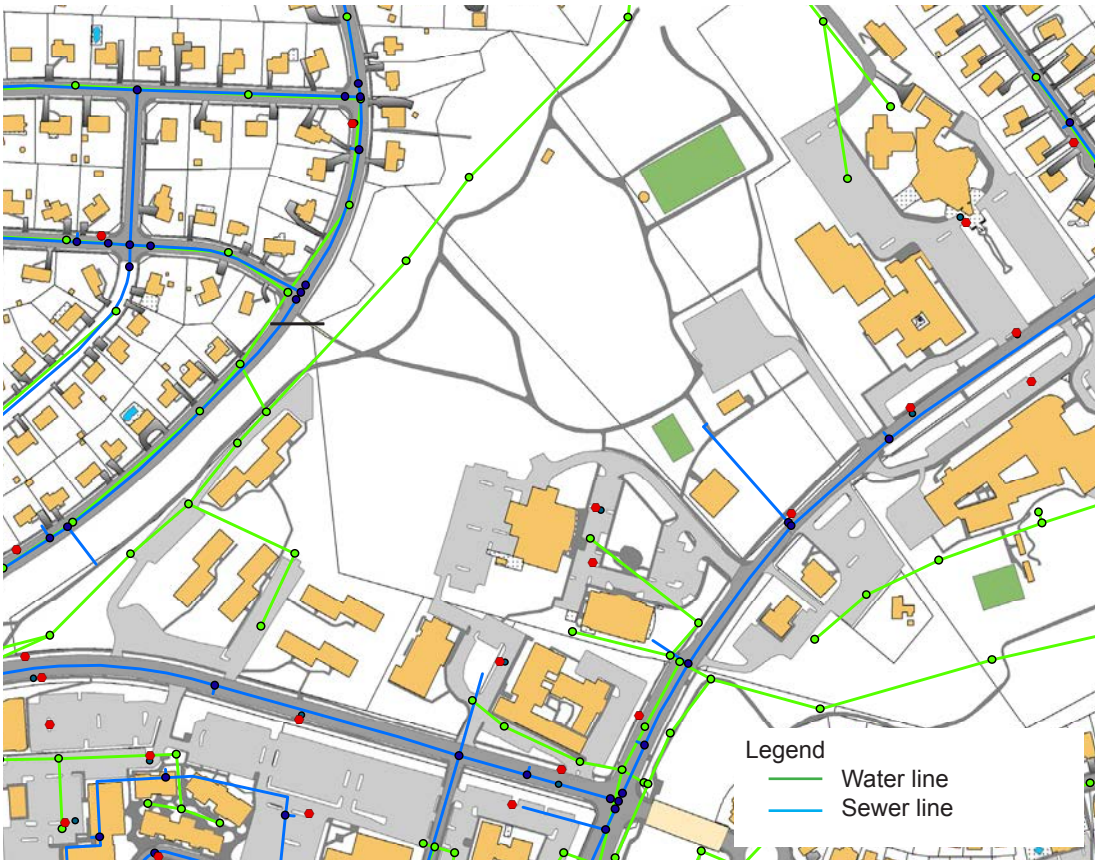


Figure 28. City of Fairfax GIS data

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.'

and the Police Station during normal operating hours. No sewer line currently serves any facilities within the park. According to site survey work and the City of Fairfax's GIS data, public sewer is available along Old Lee Highway and along Accotink Creek. The Sherwood Center and Police Station are served from the Old Lee Highway line. Pipe sizes and available capacity in the system were not mapped or evaluated for the master plan. Because of this, cost estimates assume a worst case scenario for park improvements, and use the longest run for an estimate for service—with service tie-in at the line along Accotink Creek.

Stormwater Service

Stormwater inlets are located on the crest of the hill at the edge of the skatepark, the parking lots adjacent to and within the park, and at the top of a swale directly below the Police Station according to the City of Fairfax's GIS data and the survey work completed for this master plan.

Stormwater drainage is provided by three different lines served by two outfalls located between the tennis courts and Accotink Creek. The line serving the park's parking lot crosses underneath the tennis courts with an outfall between the courts and the creek. Recent work has taken place at the base of this outfall, where significant erosion and ponding have occurred on the trail along the creek. The second line combines two lines with inlets at the parking lots serving the Sherwood Center and Police Station and the grassy swale on the park's southwestern edge. Lines encircle the bowl and connect to an outfall at the trail connection west of the tennis courts.

Pipe sizes and capacities were not mapped or evaluated. Because of this, cost estimates assume a worst case scenario for park improvements.

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. Priorities for addressing these conditions are ranked low, medium, or high and can be found in a detailed assessment in the Strategic Plan[8]. A copy is included in Appendix E of this document.

The park is beloved for its current facilities and park features. Many of the respondents to the 2014 Strategic Master Plan survey and echoed in the Van Dyck Park Master Plan survey said they liked the park as it is, although the equipment and park features were aged and in need of replacement. There were pleas to not change the park, to preserve the bowl, sledding hills, and woodlands.

8 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

Support for rearranging the location of some of the park features—if such led to a better park experience and park functioning and safety—was expressed at the public workshops.

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 and three grills. The shelter's concrete pad has cracks and is in poor condition. In addition to its service as a picnic shelter, the structure provides a shaded sitting area with a clear line of sight to the large playground.

Figure 29. Existing picnic shelter

The rental capacity of the shelter is 100 people. Used frequently as a nonreserved shelter for smaller gatherings when not rented to a single party, the park may be better served by smaller facilities that can be rented, independently, or as a group by a single user when desired.

A smaller, 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 provides a quiet getaway for people looking for a less active park experience. The shelter provides five tables and a grill and with a capacity of 40 people, it is often rented for birthday parties. This picnic shelter is in poor condition and needs a new roof. The shelter is not easily accessible, nor ADA compliant.

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. It is not in the rental system.

Playgrounds

There are four playgrounds within the park. The 2014 Strategic Plan classifies the playgrounds at Van Dyck Park as being minimally accessible and calls for the installation of a barrier-free playground in Van Dyck Park. Materials used for playground surfaces can meet both safety and accessibility standards. The current playground surfacing is engineered wood fiber, that although serving as an accessible route surfacing, requires frequent maintenance to maintain compliance with accessibility standards.

Not all of the existing play equipment at the park is accessible. Some non-compliant pieces of equipment can be retrofitted with the installation of transfer stations or ramps. Playground equipment materials tend towards plastic. Current 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.

Figure 30. Existing playground equipment

Figure 31. Existing skatepark

Park visitors have complained that the configuration of the four playgrounds is too spread out to easily keep track of multiple children on different playgrounds. Others raised concerns about the large playground's close proximity to Old Lee Highway and the park's parking lot. Fears were expressed that children would inadvertently dart into the street or parking lot and could be hurt.

The current playgrounds lack shade, either from large deciduous trees or shade structures. Shade is a highly desired feature, providing some relief from the hot sun. There are some plantings near the playground, but most are shrub hedges and low growing vegetation. Although not shade producing, people said that their children loved to hide in the vegetation and play, so even if not providing needed shade, the low vegetation does serve a play function within the park.

Skatepark

The highly popular skatepark is within a fenced area near the Old Lee Highway edge of the park. The skatepark is located south of the basketball court, and is one of the closest park features to the Sherwood Center. Serving an important user group, there was strong participation from the skatepark community at the public workshops in April and May 2017. 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. Currently fenced in from the rest of the park and in need of upgrading, the skatepark could be better integrated within the park and become a focus of visual interest for users and nonusers alike.

Design opportunities and materials options for skatepark design have greatly expanded since 2003. A new skatepark, with an at-grade form and made of new material, located in a plaza-like configuration can provide recreation opportunities for an important park user group and an aesthetic attraction for nonskaters to admire.

Tennis Courts

Four lighted tennis courts are located in the mid-level section of the park. Adjacent to St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, the church's back parking lot is used informally by tennis players given its close proximity to the courts. 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. Volleyball continues to be a popular activity.

Other Park Amenities[1]

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

1 See Strategic Plan Appendix C pages 83-84 for more details on the condition of existing amenities

Basketball Court

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


Figure 32. Existing basketball court

The Bowl and Open Play Areas

Unprogrammed open space that encourages free play is scarce within the city. The central open, grassy bowl—The Armistice Turtora Bowl—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. 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 first served basis.

Fitness Stations

Fitness stations are located along the trail. Some are missing parts, or have been recently repaired. All are aged.

Restrooms

There are three portable restrooms near the parking lot. The two public buildings adjacent to the park—the Sherwood Center and the Police Station—allow the general public to use their facilities when they are open. In addition, park visitors occasionally request to use the facilities at St. Leo's the Great Catholic Church and School next door to the park. 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 in the park.


Figure 33. Existing portable restroom with screen

Signage

Clear and well placed signage is desirable to inform and orient park users. 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.

Figure 34. Existing entry sign

Maintenance and Operational Issues

Current routine maintenance operations include trash collection, mowing, playground maintenance, landscaping, pavilion cleaning,

How to Read the Diagrams

The four graphics, Figures 35-38 on pages 25-27, were shared at the community workshops in Spring 2017 and reflect the project findings at that time.

They have been minimally edited for clarity for incorporation within this document.

Figure 35. Existing Conditions Assessment Diagram

- Color-coded circles summarize conditions found at Van Dyck Park

Figure 36. Issues List

- Color-coded and grouped listing of primary issues facing Van Dyck Park

Figure 37. Opportunities List

- Color-coded and grouped listing of primary opportunities to enhance and improve Van Dyck Park

Figure 38. Issues and Opportunities Diagram

- Color-coded and numbered issues and opportunity sites within Van Dyck Park

and trail maintenance. Daily maintenance is funded through the annual operating budget under the parks maintenance division. Larger maintenance issues are often funded through the annual capital improvement fund or the operating budget depending on the cost and the type of repairs. Often temporary repairs are completed in an effort to prolong replacement of capital equipment such as playgrounds, picnic pavilions, and trails. High cost replacement items such as the skatepark, large picnic pavilion and playgrounds have been delayed due to insufficient capital improvement funding. This continues to put a strain on facilities and make repairs more difficult as the condition of individual facilities deteriorate.

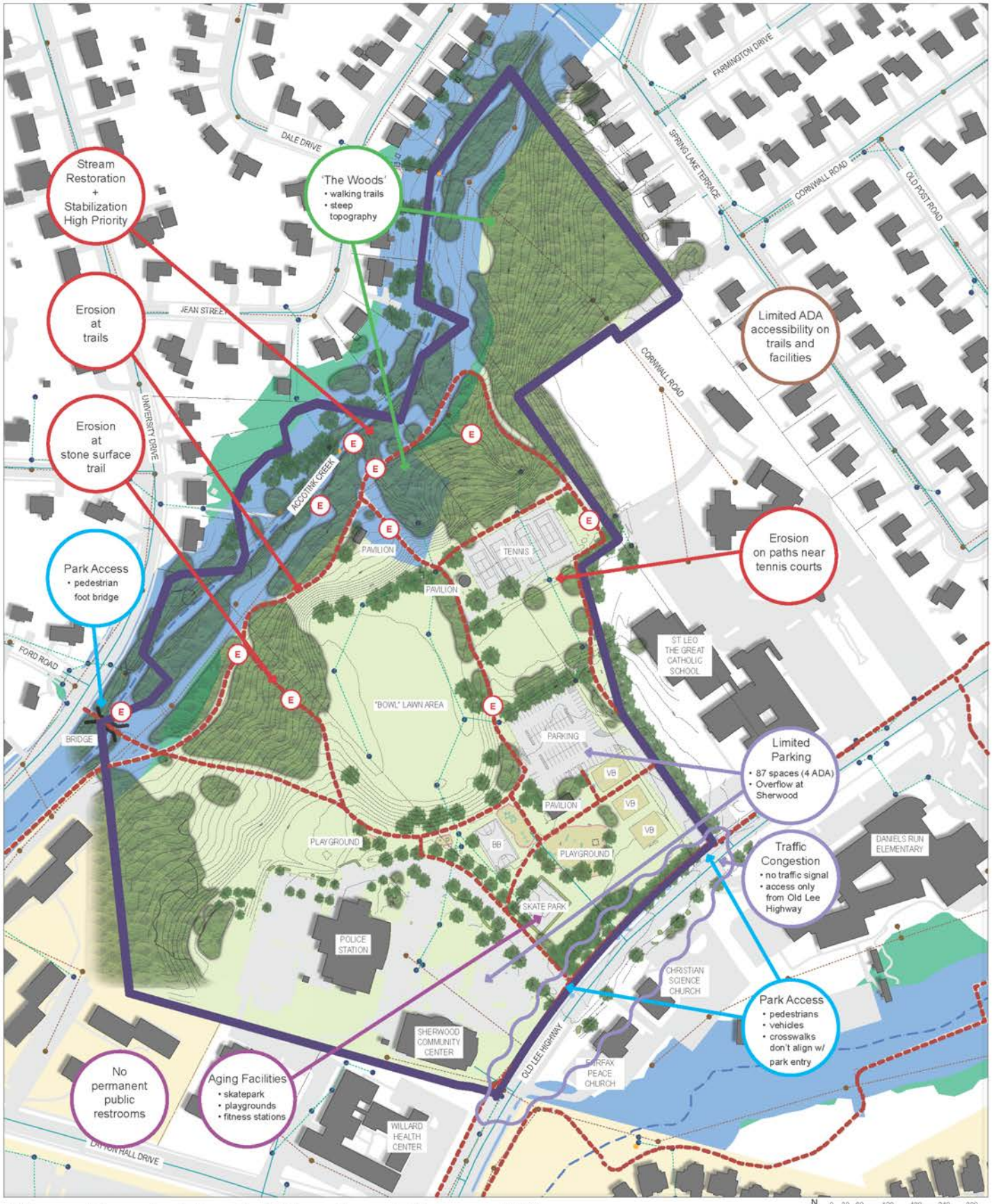
Procedures have been developed and are used in ensuring compliance with routine maintenance standards and practices that ensures the community has access to a safe, enjoyable, and visually pleasing park. These include regularly scheduled playground inspections, a landscape maintenance schedule, and daily trash pickup. Advanced planning is used to ensure that critical park repairs are completed in a timely manner with minimal disruption to the public.

As the master plan is implemented it is recommended that the design and development initiatives take into account maintenance and operational considerations to ensure efficiency and cost savings. The following factors affecting maintenance operations should be considered for any proposals within Van Dyck Park.

- Select material types that reflect low daily and long-term maintenance considerations
- Where possible, use poured-in-place for playground surfacing in lieu of wood fiber which requires more frequent maintenance and replenishment
- Design paved trails to support truck use (weight and width) for park maintenance and emergency vehicle use
- Select playground equipment that is made with materials that minimize the need for constant repairs
- Incorporate expansive radii incorporated within landscape beds and other site features for ease of mowing
- Design landscape beds to require minimal water and seasonal care
- Design and select restrooms that are self-cleaning and locking

Issues and Opportunities

Comprehensive display diagrams in the form of maps and lists summarizing issues and opportunities at the park were shared with the public during workshops in April and May 2017. Compiled from key items drawn from the 2014 Strategic Plan, outreach surveys, online survey comments, Advisory Group discussions, community outreach, and field explorations, these display diagrams highlight the most significant issues and opportunities facing Van Dyck Park today. They are displayed on the following four pages.



Van Dyck Park Master Plan

City of Fairfax

50 FORWARD VAN DYCK PARK MASTER PLAN

Figure 35. Existing Conditions Assessment Diagram

Legend

- Van Dyck Park Boundary
- Trail
- Storm Connectivity Line
- Waterline
- Sewer Line
- Storm Structure
- Storm Outlet
- Sewer Point
- Water Point
- Old Town Fairfax Transition District
- Impervious Surface
- Stream Centerline
- RPA
- AE - flood zone
- Building
- Property Boundry

N

0 30 60 120 180 240 300 Feet

Source: City of Fairfax GIS data, Dominion Surveyors, Inc. (2017 park survey)

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 the Great Catholic Church boundary. Vehicle 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 the Great Catholic Church.
2. Only one pedestrian bridge crossing Accotink Creek along the entire western perimeter of the park. Park entrance from University is not well signed. A second pedestrian bridge is north of the park.
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 the Great Catholic 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*.)
3. Stormwater runoff from large impervious surfaces such as the park parking lot.

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 (40 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 (100 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.

Figure 36. Issues display board presented at community workshops

OPPORTUNITIES

Traffic / Congestion

① Redesign park circulation/roads, parking, and park entrances. Consider single entrance to park shared with Sherwood Center/Police Station.

②③ 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 the Great Catholic Church's boundary. Connection to park parking is unclear when using Sherwood Center access drive.

Access

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 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

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

① Install permanent, accessible restrooms with plumbing in a well-sited location in the park (ease of access for children, disabled, and elderly).

②③④ 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 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 skatepark with components that challenge skaters, are aesthetically pleasing (sculptural), and multi-functional (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.

Figure 37. Opportunities display board presented at community workshops

Figure 38. Issues and Opportunities Diagram

Master Plan Development

Community is Key

Van Dyck Park is a beloved City of Fairfax institution. Heavily used, it is showing its wear and age. It is home to many activities, shared generation after generation, such as winter sledding, birthday picnics, dog walking, and use of the playgrounds. As these examples indicate, the park is primarily used for casual, informal activities and is intentionally not heavily programmed. While welcoming to those who are not city residents, the park is not intended to serve as a regional attraction, nor to have features within it that do such. Community is the key word in articulating the park's identity and role within the City of Fairfax.

Figure 39. Young women at Van Dyck Park

The park's function as an informal community gathering space shapes the formal and physical recommendations of this plan. Through community engagement, park users were more easily able to identify what the park is not than what the park is and should be. Over and over in multiple meetings and discussions, the message was clear that this park is valued for its informal community gathering space. With much discussion, consensus was achieved on the park's use as the informal gathering space for the city, with opportunities for family picnicking, group informal play, and walking in the woods, with very occasional use for special events or performances.

The master planning process provides the opportunity for the City of Fairfax to ensure that the renovation and refreshing of Van Dyck Park is completed in a coherent, sensible, and orderly fashion. Following the plan will ensure that each improvement is placed in its appropriate place, allowing space as recommended for future improvements.

What is Van Dyck Park?

Vision and Guiding Principles

The challenge of this master plan has been to aggregate these disparate, favored recreational uses into a coherent, well-organized program and place. The initial effort of this master planning process examined the park, it's history, physical condition, and issues and opportunities for enhancement and improvement. A vision statement, composed of five key factors to focus on within the park was articulated. Defined more specifically on page 30, the five factors addressed within the master planning process are:

- Sense of Place
- Community Connections
- Personal Health and Fitness
- Multi-generational Use
- Woodlands Management and Stream Restoration

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
- Pedestrian and vehicular entrances
- Stream
- Picnic Shelters
- Skatepark
- Gathering spaces

Although similar to the guiding principles developed for the 2014 Strategic Plan—each plan is focused on a sense of place, health, and conservation and stewardship—the Van Dyck Park Master Plan also emphasizes multi-generational use and community connections. The chart on this page identifies how the vision for Van Dyck Park meshes with the 2014 Guiding Principles from the Strategic Plan.

Van Dyck Park Master Plan 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.

Incorporation of the 2014 Strategic Plan's Guiding Principles				
Vision Statement: Van Dyck Park Master Plan Key Words				
Vision | ***"Amazing Experiences"***				
Guiding Principles from the 2014 to 2024 Strategic Plan				
Sense of Place	**Health & Wellness**	**Economic Vitality**	**Conservation & Stewardship**	**Strategic Partnership**
How 2014 Strategic Plan Guiding Principles are met in Van Dyck Park Master Plan				
Natural Resources	Natural Resources		Natural Resources	
	Accessible Spaces			
Stream Restoration			Stream Restoration	Stream Restoration
Branding Identity		Branding Identity		Branding Identity
	Trail Connections	Trail Connections	Trail Connections	Trail Connections
Art in the Parks		Art in the Parks		Art in the Parks
Active Recreation	Active Recreation			Active Recreation
Events and Programs		Events and Programs		Events and Programs
Socializing Places	Socializing Places			
Family Fun	Family Fun		Family Fun	

Figure 40. Chart illustrating how the Van Dyck Park Master Plan (in green) incorporates the 2014 Strategic Plan Guiding Principles (in orange)

Master Planning Design Directives

Moving from the aspirational—vision statement and guiding principles—to actual planning and design recommendations is a challenging art. To assist in that process, design directives were established. They are as follow:

- Let the design and architecture of physical improvements within the park serve as a branding opportunity
- Ensure that public art is incorporated in the implementation of the master plan and park design
- Expand the multi-generational appeal of the park with appropriate site elements, furnishings, and activities
- Use vegetation as a primary organizing element within the park—expand the woodlands throughout the park, progressing from a wild and naturalistic planting along Accotink Creek to a more structured and ordered woodland fringe of living shade structures along the bowl and path network to a gridded urban street tree pattern and supporting ornamental landscaping on the public plaza abutting Old Lee Highway
- Link the park to the larger city-wide trail network—establish a *Creek-to-Creek* trail link within Van Dyck Park, between Daniel's Run and Accotink Creek
- Connect the park to multi-modal links along Old Lee Highway and University Drive

Open Space Preservation

Recognized in this master planning process is the City of Fairfax's objective to maintain a balanced distribution of active and passive recreation, open space, and natural areas throughout the city. The City of Fairfax's 2014 Strategic Plan calls for preservation of at least 40% of Van Dyck Park as undeveloped land. Both concept alternatives and the recommended master plan exceed the 40% goal. The recommended master plan retains 43% of the park as undeveloped open space, excluding the RPA and floodplain. If the 6.6 acres representing the RPA and floodplain are included in the total, the undeveloped acreage is 61% of the overall park land.

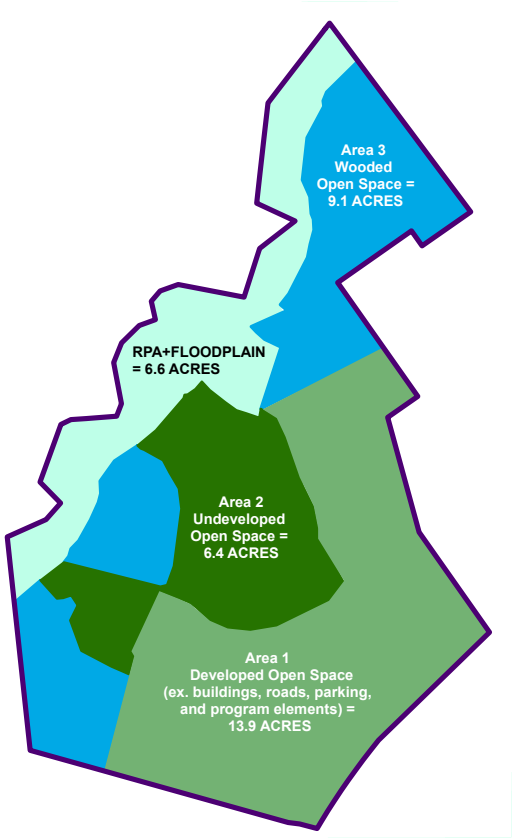


Figure 41. Open Space diagram indicating percentage of park that remains undeveloped per the 2014 Strategic Master Plan recommendation—43% of the area outside RPA and floodplain

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.[1]

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

Figure 42. 1. The Front Door

Figure 43. 2. The Bowl and Woodlands

Figure 44. 3. The Stream Valley

Park Character Areas

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

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

1 The Front Door

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.

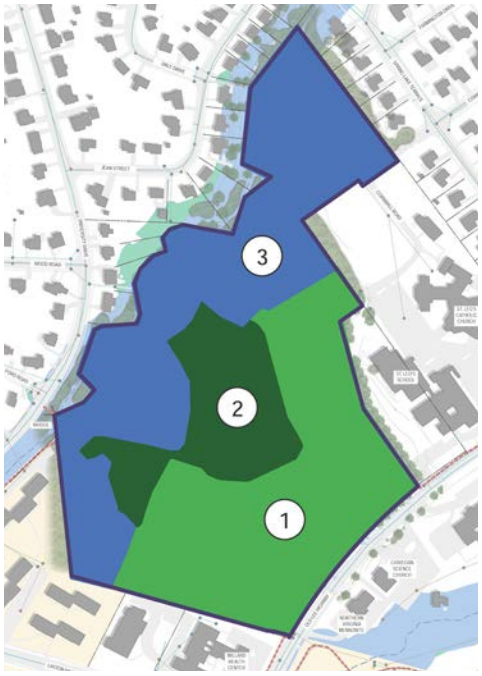


Figure 45. Park character areas

Master Plan Concept Alternatives Formulation

This plan proposes improvements to the physical organization of the park and its layout to ensure that the park works and functions well. 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 and that a variety of experiences can be had within the same park. 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.

Concept Alternatives

A draft program was generated for the development of the two concept alternatives. 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 its arrangement of similar program features. **The Bowl and Woodlands** and **The Stream Valley** areas of the park remain largely untouched, aside from restoration and trail improvements. Reactions to the concepts and workshop materials are documented in Appendix A. Concept Alternatives 1 and 2 are compared in the chart below and on the following page.

Concept alternatives were shared with the community in the second community workshop in May and reviewed by the Advisory Group multiple times. Along with the concept alternatives diagrams, photo boards eliciting experiential character of park components were posted. Color coded sticker dots for "like" and "do not like" were provided to collect reactions from workshop participants.

	Concept Alternative 1	Concept Alternative 2
The Front Door		
Multi-age Playground	• *Leave playground at existing site*	• *Move to site of existing parking - expand and consolidate smaller playgrounds in one area for multi-age use (Materials – wood, metal)*
Skatepark	• *North side of Police Station on edge of sledding hill (Materials – concrete*	• *Along Old Lee Highway frontage in conjunction with street facing plaza (Materials – concrete)*
Picnic Shelters and Restrooms	• *Two smaller picnic shelters facing a plaza near existing location* • *One small picnic shelter near skatepark* • *Restroom in conjunction with two shelters near plaza*	• *One large picnic shelter near existing location* • *Three small picnic shelters added in Front Door section of park* • *Restroom near shelter at existing location*
Court Sports	• *Tennis courts remain in place* • *2 volleyball courts adjacent to tennis courts* • *1 full basketball court remains in place* • *1/2 basketball court adjacent to full basketball court*	• *Tennis courts remain in place* • *2 volleyball courts remain in place* • *1 full basketball court remains in place* • *1/2 basketball court adjacent to playground at former parking*
Parking	• *Reconfigure parking in place, retain same number of parking spaces, add pervious pavers, stormwater infiltration*	• *Relocate parking in two lots, expand amount of parking by 20-30 spaces, add pervious pavers, stormwater infiltration*
Plazas and Gathering Spaces	• *Create formal plaza, gathering space in center of uplands adjacent to playground relocated on site of former parking lot*	• *Create formal plaza along Old Lee Highway, integrate it with new skatepark*
Open Lawn Area for Informal Play	• *Two defined areas on either side of playground (playground in existing location)*	• *One area adjacent between volleyball and relocated parking area; another adjacent to tennis courts*

	Concept Alternative 1	Concept Alternative 2
The Bowl and Woodlands		
Open, Shady and Unstructured Play Areas • *No differences between Concept Alternatives 1 and 2*	• *Retain sledding hill, open bowl, small picnic shelter* • *Adjust alignment, surfacing and create ADA accessible path to connect top and bottom of park, display garden along switchbacks* • *Address erosion issues*	• *Retain sledding hill, open bowl, small picnic shelter* • *Adjust alignment, surfacing and create ADA accessible path to connect top and bottom of park, display garden along switchbacks* • *Address erosion issues*
The Stream Valley		
Living Learning Lab • *No differences between Concept Alternatives 1 and 2*	• *Accotink Creek restoration* • *Woodlands* • *Paved trails, boardwalks, benches* • *Improve accessibility* • *Demonstrate stream restoration techniques* • *Involve community and school children in restoration activities*	• *Accotink Creek restoration* • *Woodlands* • *Paved trails, boardwalks, benches* • *Improve accessibility* • *Demonstrate stream restoration techniques* • *Involve community and school children in restoration activities*
Circulation		
Vehicular Offset park improvements 40 feet from centerline of Old Lee Highway to protect space for future improvement	• *Retain two vehicular entrance drives: park entry drive adjacent to St. Leo the Great Catholic Church and Sherwood Center entry*	• *Close vehicular park drive adjacent to St. Leo the Great Catholic Church; access park from Sherwood Center entry*
Pedestrian Entrances and Path Network • *No differences between Concept Alternatives 1 and 2*	• *Expand pedestrian entrance from University Drive* • *Create pedestrian entrance from Cornwall Road (path on back of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church (athletic field)* • *Enhance pedestrian entrance on Old Lee Highway* • *Close two existing crosswalks* • *Create mid-block crosswalk*	• *Expand pedestrian entrance from University Drive* • *Create pedestrian entrance from Cornwall Road (path on back of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church (athletic field)* • *Enhance pedestrian entrance on Old Lee Highway* • *Close two existing crosswalks* • *Create mid-block crosswalk*
In General		
	• *Create a variety of experiences* • *Public Art display* • *Garden planting* • *Soft trails* • *Paved trails* • *Boardwalks* • *Address erosion and surface treatments*	• *Create a variety of experiences* • *Public Art display* • *Garden planting* • *Soft trails* • *Paved trails* • *Boardwalks* • *Address erosion and surface treatments*

Figure 46. Concept alternatives photo boards presented at community workshop

Figure 47. Concept Alternative 1 as presented at public workshop

Figure 48. Photo board with concept alternatives and park elements options

Figure 49. Concept Alternative 2 as presented at public workshop

Recommended Master Plan Concept

This section of the master plan document focuses on the recommended master plan and its program elements—their selection, their location, and their character. Drawn primarily from Concept Alternative 2, the recommended plan proposes a number of substantial changes to the park, refurbishings and upgrades, and stewardship for its natural resources.

Building from Concept Alternative 2

Most attendees at the various meetings and respondents to the web postings supported all of or most of the elements and their location as described in Concept Alternative 2. Key recommendations for incorporation in the recommended master plan include:

- Close the vehicular entry drive adjacent to St. Leo the Great 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 vehicular entry for the Sherwood Center and Police Station as the only public vehicular 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 meshes with the proposed streetscape concept for the corridor along Old Lee Highway, inviting passerbys 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
- Replace and update the skatepark, relocate the basketball court and playground, protect the tennis courts and two of the three volleyball courts

The Park as a Whole

Views and Vistas

Plan recommendations respect the existing vistas within and into the park, keeping the view of the 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 along the park frontage. The plaza, a community gathering and

Program Elements in the Recommended Master Plan

The Park as a Whole

- Views and Vistas
- Circulation - Trails, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Access
- Circulation - Vehicle Traffic
- Circulation - Parking
- Vegetation
- Public Art
- Events
- Utilities and infrastructure Upgrades
- Park Entry Signs
- Wayfinding
- Other Park Amenities - Making a Place Specific

The Front Door

- Picnic Shelters
- Multi-age Playground
- Skate Plaza
- Tennis Courts
- Volleyball Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Free Play Areas
- Civic Green at Sherwood Center
- Streetscape Plaza

The Bowl and Woodlands

- The Bowl
- Free Play Lawns
- Sledding Hills
- New Trail Connections

The Stream Valley

- Stream Restoration
- Living Learning Lab

Figure 50. Van Dyck Park Master Plan

people watching space, is designed to extend deeply into the top of the park so that users do not feel that they are too close to the traffic. Filled with movable tables, public art, plants and trees to provide shade, the plaza will serve as a grand and welcoming entry into the park for both the user and the passerby gazing quickly into the park.

The view into the park other areas is equally important. Expanding and adding entries to the park will welcome and invite users into the park from surrounding neighborhoods. Currently, none of the park entries provide views or clear sight lines into the park. The master plan's intent is to open up the views and pull neighbors and visitors into the park to explore and enjoy its many resources.

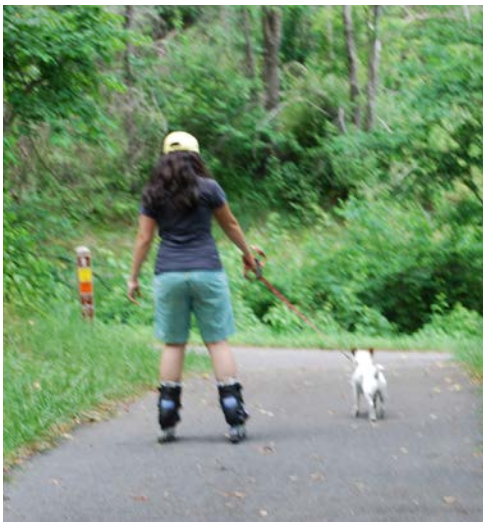


Figure 51. Skating on an asphalt paved trail

Circulation - Trails, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Access

The parks trail network should clearly tie into the regional 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.

A new trail alignment to provide an ADA accessible route from Old Lee Highway to University Drive through the park is proposed as a paved switchback trail connecting the upper and lower sections of the park. Terraces with special plantings and public art is incorporated along the switchback trail.

A new trail segment is recommended to connect the formalized pedestrian entrance at Cornwall Road with the existing trail system, tying into the park trail system near the tennis courts. New paved trails are proposed for the active area of the park, The Front Door, connecting the new plaza area with the picnic shelters, playground, and Sherwood Center. An enhanced pedestrian connection between the Sherwood Center green and Van Dyck Park is incorporated and makes use of traffic calming devices where the trail crosses the entry drive and new parking lot.

Trails located on slopes subject to erosion or heavy stormwater runoff should be surfaced with materials such as asphalt or concrete. Trails on level surfaces that are not subject to flooding or heavy stormwater runoff can be made from more pervious yet accessible surface materials such as crushed blue stone. Soft trail surfaces such as natural leaf litter or shredded mulch are appropriate for use on trails in the woodlands that do not experience high use, erosion or heavy stormwater runoff. Trail flooding at the base of the park's hillside adjacent to Accotink Creek may be addressed in a variety of ways, including bridging, piping or regrading to redirect stormflow.

Five formal, nonvehicular 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, one at the location of the current park vehicular entrance which is to be removed and reconfigured as a more narrow, pedestrian-oriented paved path with emergency and maintenance vehicle access only. The second entry on Old Lee Highway is at the plaza itself, that while large and running the extent of the park's frontage along the road, will incorporate a formal entry sign with potential banners and ability to post notices. The third pedestrian entry along Old Lee Highway is the existing pedestrian entry at the current vehicular drive to the Sherwood Center and the Police Station.

In conjunction with plans for the three formal pedestrian park entries along 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 that is sited with longer horizontal and vertical sight lines than the current crosswalk locations provide. The installation of a sophisticated pedestrian signal such as a Hawk Ped signal or similar should be evaluated during the discussion on crosswalk location(s).

The fourth and fifth formal pedestrian park entries are located on the park's northern and eastern edges. One entry is the current pedestrian entry off of University Drive. 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. The fifth formal pedestrian entry is proposed at Cornwall Road to provide an official park access point for neighborhoods north and east of the park. Linked to the park with a trail located on park land surrounding the school's athletic fields, it formalizes the current informal park access provided by cutting across the church parking lot.

Figure 52. Existing parking lot

Circulation - Vehicle Traffic

In support of the proposed master plan parking improvements, the existing drive to the Sherwood Center and Police Station serves as the new, single vehicular entrance to the park. Park parking is relocated to the southern end of the park, directly connecting to the Sherwood Center and Police Station entrance.

The vehicle entrance, now serving three community uses—Van Dyck Park, the Sherwood Center and the Police Station—is enhanced with a landscaped median at its throat, separating the inbound and outbound traffic on the drive. A wide, raised crosswalk is proposed to cross the entry drive between the Sherwood Center green and Van Dyck Park. Additional plantings are incorporated to emphasize a strong connection between the park and the Sherwood Center, calling the vehicular driver's attention and visual recognition of the pedestrian use of the entrance drive.

The entrance drive leads to an active police operations area and parking lot. Traffic calming measures are not intended to impede police activities but instead to strike a balance between community pedestrian use of the space and vehicular traffic. These improvements, both welcoming and assisting with traffic management, provide a focal community greeting point to Van Dyck Park, the Sherwood Center, and the Police Station.

The current vehicular entrance to the park, located between St. Leo the Great Catholic School and the park's volleyball courts, is closed to public vehicular use in the master plan. The drive is repurposed as a new pedestrian entrance, with vehicular use limited to emergency and maintenance access.

Coordination with the ongoing study of the Old Lee Highway corridor will be necessary as both the Van Dyck Park Master Plan is implemented and the corridor study is completed.

Figure 53. Example of permeable/pervious pavers in a parking lot

Circulation - Parking

Determining the size of the new parking facilities was based on visual observation of current parking demands and patterns of use. If demand increases dramatically, shuttle service to off-site parking areas provides a means to increase parking capacity while not consuming more of the park land for vehicular storage. It is a challenge to provide adequate parking, while avoiding the "parking the park" result where the park is filled with parking spaces, destroying the very environment desired. On most days, parking is sufficient and overflow parking is available at the Sherwood Center and Police Station parking lots.

Figure 54. Bioretention or rain garden plantings adjacent to a parking lot

Two new parking lots replace the existing park parking lot, providing for a net increase of 10-12 spaces specifically for Van Dyck Park. Located adjacent to the entrance drive at the edge of the park, parking is removed from the center of activities within the park. The larger lot with 57 spaces—in a linear configuration paralleling the entrance drive—also incorporates a broad raised pedestrian walkway, connecting the Sherwood Center green and Van Dyck Park. A smaller more rectangular parking area with 42 spaces is sited to the northwest of the Police Station, just east of the sledding hill. The smaller lot fits within a highly restricted site, bounded by the steep topography of the bowl on one side and the entry and parking of the Police Station on another. Further and more detailed drawings may provide a slightly different geometric configuration of the lot.

Stormwater infiltration improvements such as permeable pavers, rain gardens, and planted medians with shade trees are recommended for incorporation in the new parking lots and entry drive features. Trees and shrubs will provide a buffer and visually screen parking from Old Lee Highway and other park features.

Figure 55. Tree plantings, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, Dan Kiley

Long-term, there are ongoing discussions about the potential to provide structured parking at 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 opportunity under discussion is 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 can be made available for park use during the Willard Center's off-hours.

Vegetation

Van Dyck Park has a mature forest canopy throughout much of the park. However, non-native and invasive plants are found throughout the park. To ensure the health of desirable plants in the parks, the city should take steps to address the growth of non-native and invasive plants. Treatment can range from organized volunteer work parties to application of herbicide by licensed professionals. Costs for professional treatment also can range widely, with professional management costing as much as $25,000 per acre for treatment, management, and replanting.

Other areas of the park benefit from the addition of new plantings to enhance and restore the tree canopy, recognizing that some of the more mature trees are nearing the end of their life-cycle. New plants selected should be hardy, low-maintenance, and when possible, native to the area.

As with 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, their planting style progressing from a formal grid at the street plaza to a natural arrangement along Accotink Creek.

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 the Great Catholic School and the park, new plantings will provide an attractive soft screen defining the boundary. Display gardens at the new park entrance will reinforce its location 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 are composed of both trees and shrubs providing shade, screening, and visual appeal.

Memorial trees should be preserved in place, where possible, and such plantings should continue to be encouraged, adding to the

park's tree canopy. The city should consider expanding its current policy to more explicitly address the length of commitment to the maintenance of the memorial, its replacement, signage and if it may be relocated should the need arise.

Many comments were received on the potential for special use or display gardens within the park. This plan recommends clustering any such features to reduce maintenance and to provide irrigation if needed. Potential sites for such use include the park entrance, the new walk connecting the upper and lower park areas, and the park plaza. Display gardens may take many forms or themes, including pollinator gardens, native plant gardens, and seasonal floral displays. Community gardens for individual gardener's vegetable plots are not recommended at this park.

Figure 56. Playful public art - *Colour Pencils* by Jonna Phojalainen

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 the art can be enjoyed by all members of the community. Public art in Van Dyck provides an opportunity to create and reinforce a unique character for the park.

Public art opportunity areas include the streetscape plaza with interactive or iconic pieces visible from Old Lee Highway that would call attention to the park and its entrances; incorporation of public art within the playground and skatepark; or the stream valley—reinforcing with art the sense of place that is already in development. Additionally, public art incorporated in park structures such as picnic shelters and interactive play components in the active core will 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. A prime opportunity is the incorporation of public art along the serpentine sloped switch back trail linking the upper and lower sections of the park. Intended to be accessible, the trail provides an interesting opportunity for a series or linear type of story-telling art.

In 2015, the City of Fairfax developed Public Art Guidelines with the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. 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 which should be followed for any public art incorporated within Van Dyck Park.

Figure 57. Farmer's Market

Events

While recognizing that Van Dyck Park is not a formal event space, the master plan does provides space to host community-scaled

events, with several unprogrammed open lawns and paved gathering areas. The streetscape plaza and adjacent free play lawn is ideal for the Irish Festival, farmers markets, Movies at the Park, food trucks, and small music performances. When parking is not highly in demand, portions of the parking lots could support food truck vendors.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Van Dyck Park has little infrastructure in place. If the recommendations contained in this master plan are to be achieved, a significant investment in infrastructure is required. Improvements such as restrooms will require public water and sewer service; the plaza, picnic shelters, lighting, and security features will require electrical service—eliminating the need for generators, and all areas of the park when improved will need to comply with current stormwater regulations.

Electrical service is provided to the park from several sources. New electrical service is needed to power the picnic shelters, vendor set-ups on the plaza or in parking areas, pedestrian lighting and special feature lighting on the new plaza, seasonal display lighting, and security lighting for the sports courts in addition to the currently lit tennis courts. The large picnic shelter should receive enough power to support group activities with music and lighting [by permit] at the shelter. The policy for park use is dawn to dusk so no lighting other than security lighting and power for emergency call access stations is envisioned for the rest of the park or its trails and paths.

Entry signs should be lit with landscape lighting (not electric signs), which will require a power source provided to each. Entry signs are located at each of the five formal pedestrian and vehicular entries to the park.

Water service is provided to the Sherwood Center and the Police Station and the park's drinking fountain from the service line in Old Lee Highway. This plan assumes that the tap point is from this line, as well, for any new park improvements. Tap fees and costs to run new water lines from Old Lee Highway are reflected in the master plan cost estimate in Appendix B. Water service is needed for new drinking fountains, irrigation for specific and specialized areas of plantings, and the permanent restrooms.

Sewer service is likely to be the most costly service to provide service to the park. Trunk lines run adjacent to and within the park. One line is located Old Lee Highway and serves the Sherwood Center and Police Station, but its alignment does not extend east of the entrance drive to these two buildings. A separate line follows the Accotink Stream corridor at the bottom of the park. In addition to available capacity, as sewer service is gravity-driven, elevations of

the line and location of need will affect which source is used. For purposes of this master plan, the cost estimate assumed the worst case, most costly, option—tie-in at the line along Accotink Creek, the greatest distance from which to run a new line.

Stormwater lines exist within the park and any additional needs can be tied into the existing system. More likely, much of the stormwater needs may be addressed with infiltration techniques such as porous pavers, swales, rain gardens and other green approaches to stormwater management.

As planning efforts move forward, additional investigations should be made to review the feasibility of tying park improvements to the water and sewer sources currently serving the Sherwood Center and the Police Station.

Park Entry Signs

Attractive entry signs are the first formal welcome to visitors to the park. Five locations have been identified for formal signs, four signs that mark vehicular and pedestrian entrances and a fifth located on the plaza and visible to those traveling along Old Lee Highway. The four signs around the park's perimeter are low-key, likely made of wood and similar to the City of Fairfax's current sign vocabulary. The fifth sign, to be located on the plaza, may have space within in it for displaying banners or text changes, but is not envisioned to be an electronic readerboard styled sign.

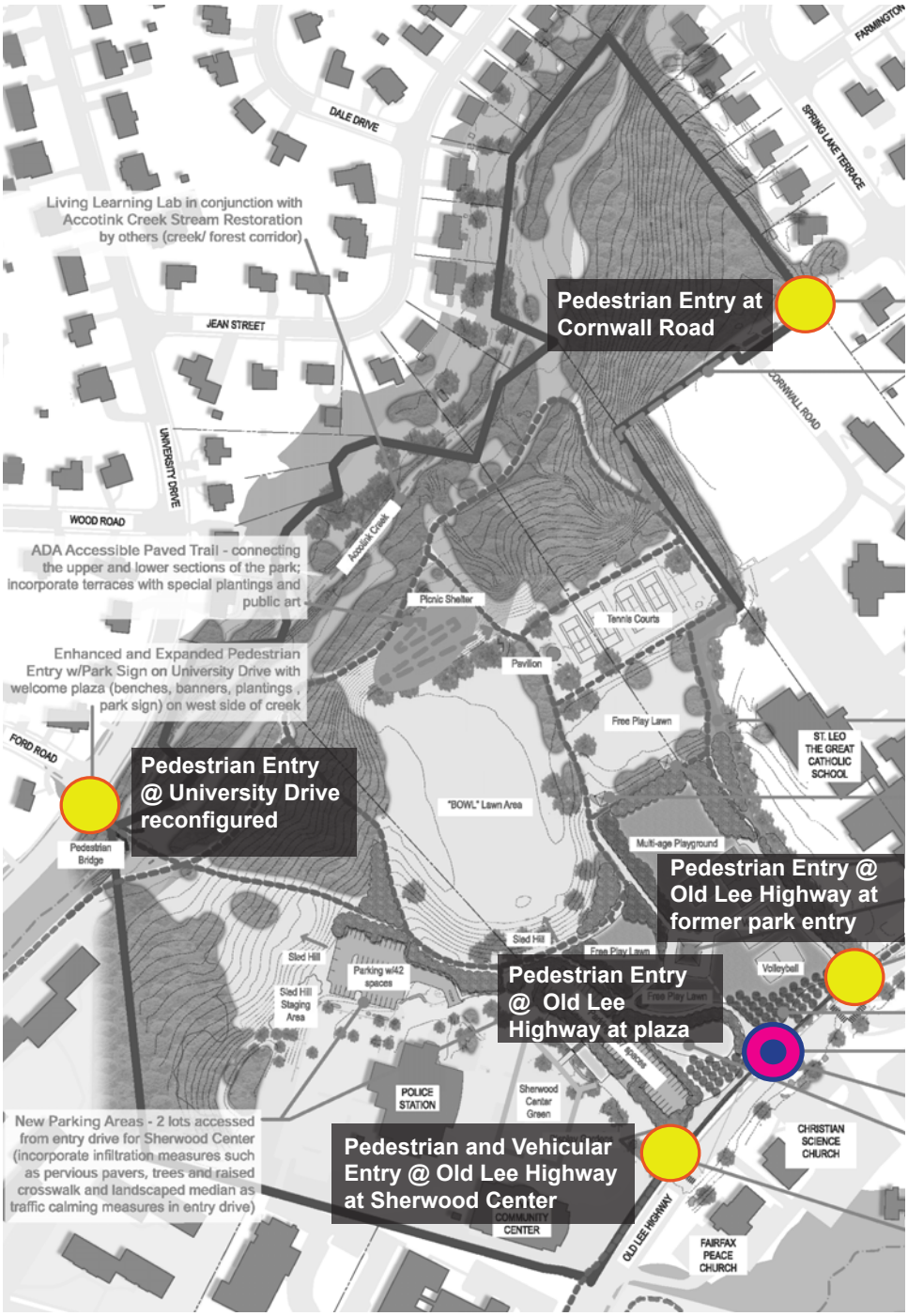


Figure 58. Proposed location of entry signs

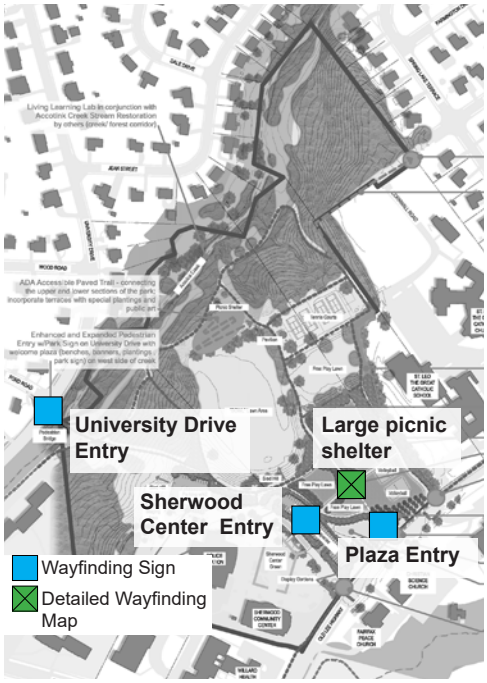


Figure 59. Proposed location of wayfinding elements

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signs are additional welcoming and orientation elements. They are to be located at three of the park's entries: the new plaza; the entry from the Sherwood Center green; and at University Drive. A more detailed map with information is to be incorporated into the design of the new picnic shelter and restroom in the core of the park's active area, and its Front Door.

Other Park Amenities—Making a Place Specific

A master plan is a diagram that provides direction and instruction for the future location and scale of park features and improvements. By its nature and scale of recommendations, it does not specifically and in great detail address many of the elements within a park that make a place special and identifiable. This level of detail is important to the overall character and appeal of the park and should be addressed as projects are developed.

Site furniture selection for benches along the trails and tables, chairs and benches for use on the plaza will affect the appearance of the park. Van Dyck has some site furniture in place that is sturdy and more maintenance-free. The recently installed black metal bench near the interpretive sign for the Armistice Turtora bowl is attractive, sturdy, and requires less maintenance than the wooden benches found throughout the park. Site furniture installed in the park should be the same or from a similar appearing suite—tables, chairs, benches, trash cans, etc. Most furniture in a park is fixed in place for security reasons. Research supports the use of movable furniture as a positive way to encourage ownership and place-making by park users. If possible, the plaza will benefit from being outfitted with movable site furniture to allow for a user to follow the sun and its warmth on an early spring day by moving a chair during the day, to allow the plaza to be configured for various events, including vendors and seasonal activities, and to allow for the normal ebb and flow of various sized groups and gatherings. Additions of chess tables, ping pong tables, bocce courts, or book racks with informal lending libraries are among the many ways to activate and enliven public space, an especially important opportunity in the new plaza along Old Lee Highway.

These decisions contribute to the fine grain of the park's character and its branding. Attention to this level of detailed improvements and successful programming will positively shape the visitor's impression of the park.

The Front Door

This is the active section of the park, incorporating many of the existing park features refreshed, replaced, and relocated.

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, along with a small storage area approximately 100 square feet in size for park use. 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. Robust lighting and electrical power should be supplied to the shelter, in addition to the service provided for the restrooms.

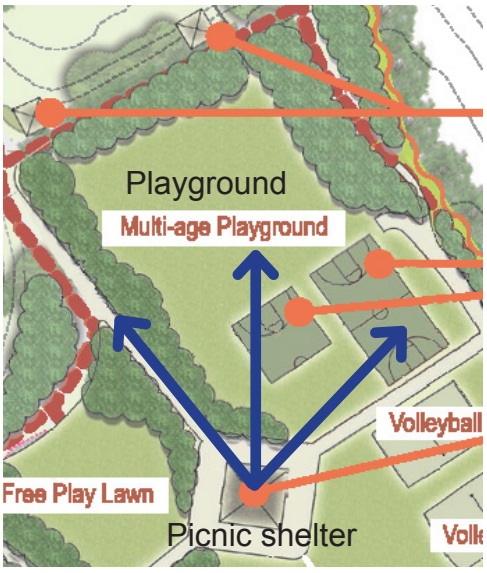


Figure 60. Maintain an unobstructed view to the playground from the picnic shelter (80 person capacity with restroom)

The architecture of the central, large picnic shelter should be designed to draw visitors into the park with an 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 orientation within the park and 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, and trash/recycling receptacles for informal, unscheduled use by park visitors.

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. During the public review a suggestion was made to flip the proposed location of the playground and basketball courts, reducing the distance between the playground and the parking lot. After evaluating the suggestion, the master plan recommends that the playground be relocated to the site of the existing park parking lot, placing it farther from Old Lee Highway, a desire expressed by many at the community workshops. The distance between the new parking lot along the vehicular entrance drive and the playground is not significantly different for either location.

Figure 61. Sculptural playground climbing feature

Safety and the opportunity for visual scanning and oversight was considered in the new location of the playground. Sight lines are retained between the playground and the primary picnic shelter. Any trees planted are large deciduous trees, with their canopy raised above the adjacent walks and grounds, providing clear sight lines underneath. In addition, the trees will provide shade, a desired

feature on hot summer days. The playground is ringed with three picnic shelters, the large one located in the center of the Front Door area of the park, and the two smaller shelters on the edge of the playground above the existing tennis courts.

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, but could include some shade structures. The playground should not be bounded by a fence, but could make use of other edge-defining elements such as seat walls or vegetation. Public art or sculptural climbing features could be incorporated in the design of playground elements or site furnishings. Adult fitness/play equipment should be incorporated in any configuration.

Skate Plaza

Figure 62. Integrated skate plaza (credit: Spohn Ranch Skateparks)

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, contemporary in style. The skatepark should be located at or below grade, without the elevated metal structures found in the current skatepark. Lighting is for security purposes only.

Concrete features, sculptural in nature, with some sections set below grade, are preferred. Concrete skateparks are much quieter than parks with steel elements. In the specific design of the park, 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 courts. Lighting is upgraded to LED fixtures. No additional courts or weather enclosed courts are proposed in this plan.

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 for maintenance improvements. Lighting is for security purposes only.

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. Lighting is for security purposes only.

Free Play Areas

Free play, or unorganized unscheduled play is a greatly desired amenity, and one of the biggest activities at Van Dyck Park. The master plan protects spaces for this activity, from taking a hands-off approach to the sledding hills and the bowl, to the creation of small, open lawn areas around and adjacent to the playground and courts uses within the park. One free play area is located between the volleyball and relocated parking area; another is adjacent to the tennis courts. Combined, both of these free play areas equal approximately one acre. Intentionally configured to minimize their attractiveness for organized athletics—practices or games—the spaces are large enough for users to kick a soccer ball, stretch out and read a book, turn cartwheels, or engage in other similar activities of their choice.

Civic Green at Sherwood Center

One of the key elements and design elements 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 entrance drive to the Sherwood Center, Police Station and now Van Dyck Park. Providing both physical and visual connections, the new and widened crosswalk connect the spaces rather than dividing them.

The strong pedestrian connection also creates the opportunity to increase activities associated with the Sherwood Community Center and the park. Enhanced adult and senior programming, using the park as a resource, and guided trail walks are supported by the addition of a better pedestrian connection between the park and the center, newly accessible paths and trails, and benches along the trails.

Figure 63. Outdoor ping pong

Streetscape Plaza

An active, but largely unprogrammed paved streetscape plaza (approximately 10,500 square feet) is envisioned for the Front Door, the front 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 are 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 schematics of the proposed form of the plaza is curvilinear, reflecting and abstracting the curving Accotink Creek along the park's northern edge. The plaza will serve as an urban link to downtown, encouraging foot traffic between the two areas.

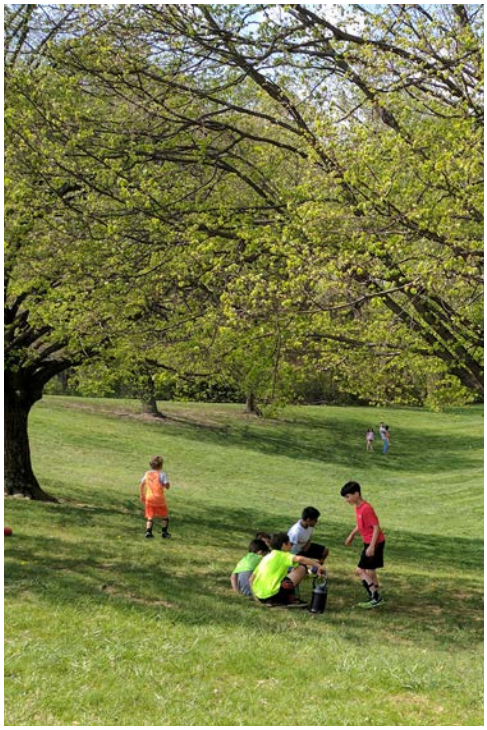


Figure 64. The bowl

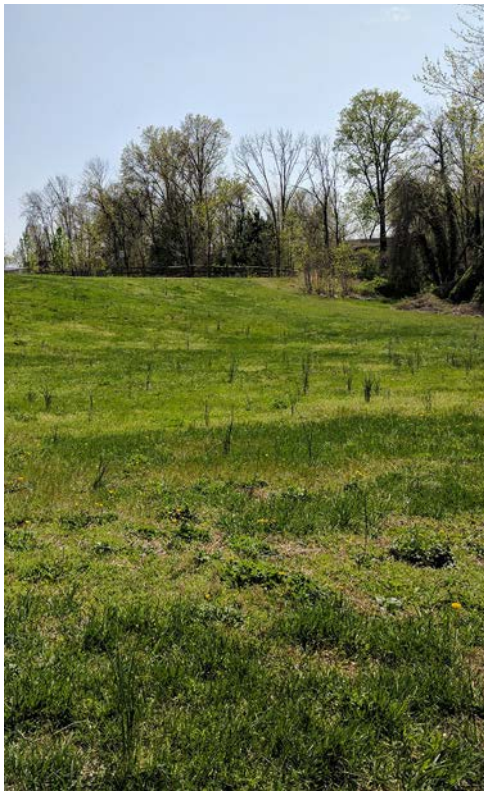


Figure 65. The sledding hill

A social gathering area, the streetscape plaza can include cafe seating with umbrellas, drinking fountains, outdoor game tables for ping pong and chess, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, and benches and seatwalls. Ample open space offers opportunities for installations of public art. Pedestrian lighting on the plaza, in the form of traditional fixtures or bollards, seasonal lighting, and power for vendor stalls for special events are supplied, extending the useful life of this new public space.

The surface of the plaza must be designed for flexibility for use by vendors or other special needs, and to carry the weight of maintenance and emergency vehicles. Permeable pavers can be used in some areas in support of sustainable stormwater management efforts.

The configuration of the plaza accounts for the future work associated with improvements within the Old Lee Highway corridor. No permanent improvements other than paving are proposed within 40 feet of the current center line of Old Lee Highway.

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 Trail Connections Between the Upper and Lower Park

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, as well as removal of invasives and introduction of natives in the natural areas of the park. Informal trails are open for dog walking on leash, no dog park is incorporated in this master plan for Van Dyck Park.

The Stream Valley

The lower section of the park along University Drive is the unsung, often unknown portion of Van Dyck Park. Home to Accotink Creek, a wide mowed sewer easement and numerous walking trails in the

heavily wooded lower slopes of the park, the master plan proposes actions to draw more users to this hidden sector of the park. Bird watchers, dog walkers (dogs on leash), runners, and walkers have long treasured the lower slopes. Improved trails, restored stream and improved drainage with wayfinding and inviting signs will greatly improve the physical attractiveness of this area of the park.

Guidelines for Stream Restoration

The restoration of the Accotink Creek stream segment on the park's boundary will greatly enhance opportunities for environmental learning, and increase passive recreation space while adding native vegetation and improving the site's habitat offerings. Improvements to the stream segment should also be done in conjunction with overall site improvements in the park. Given the topographic conditions of the park, surface runoff is carried from the park's higher elevations to the stream valley, often resulting in erosion.

Tentative plans call for working on approximately 1,700 linear feet of the stream, with funding by the City of Fairfax's Department of Public Works. The stream restoration work should be done with the City of Fairfax's Parks & Recreation Department's involvement and project management given the site's location within and adjacent to Van Dyke Park. 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 Park Master Plan.

- Perform an existing vegetation inventory and survey
- Save mature trees and plant new, natives species
- Use the existing sewer line easement for construction access
- Integrate educational components with stream restoration
- Coordinate University Drive pedestrian entrance improvements and expansion to include seating area and new sign with design and construction of stream restoration improvements (entry area can serve as gathering space for classes and groups visiting the stream and a Living Learning Lab)

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 are incorporated through access to trails along the stream, boardwalks, and interpretive elements. As was done with the Daniel's Run effort, there is an opportunity to again work in conjunction with a consultant, such as Lands and Waters, to design, implement and perhaps fund a similar ecological educational component. The following are

Figure 66. Young researcher testing the water through an educational program at nearby Daniel's Run (photo credit: Jeanette Stewart, Lands and Waters)

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

recommendations for the 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 progressive techniques and best management practices 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

Implementation

The best way to ensure the vision expressed in this master plan is achieved is to redevelop the park in a comprehensive plan. This requires funding. 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.

If instead, the decision is to begin with several smaller projects, it is critical that a full site plan for ALL the park improvements is completed prior to any construction beginning or any features being relocated. If the park is redeveloped one project at a time, the risk is great that the master plan guidance will not be fully followed, nor will the impact of not following the guidance of the plan be clear at first. For example, if a feature was renovated, and relocated to an area not assigned in the master plan, a ripple effect will be created. Small initial changes, done piecemeal, will make achieving the overall plan, embraced and supported by the community, much more challenging in the long-run. 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.

Mitigation of the effects of stormwater runoff in the park are considered in this master plan through recommended improvements, and should be coordinated throughout the design and implementation of park development. Implementation of the master plan should anticipate extensive ground disturbance. The following are suggestions for mitigation.

- With 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, therefore stormwater treatment anywhere within the park boundaries is acceptable (even if not directly tied to site of disturbance —the improvements to the existing parking lot could address the need for treatment created by a playground expansion)

Priority Projects for Early Implementation

Potential early action projects include:

- Skatepark 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 a trail around the edge of the school's athletic field 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
- Tree planting

Cost Estimate

Estimates were developed for implementation of the recommendations of the master plan. All totaled, the estimate for the master plan construction costs is approximately eight million dollars. A large number, when cast across a park of 36 acres with the features desired, the estimated cost for park improvements is understandable. Developed from a diagrammatic master plan, costs include prime contractor mark-ups and includes a design contingency allowance. At this stage, as all the scope or design criteria is not known, the contingencies are high, twenty to twenty-five percent on average. This percentage will reduce in later stages of design development as more details become known through the design process.

Each program element is separately estimated, and then totaled, providing the City of Fairfax with a clear sense of the costs of implementation for specific areas and features in the park.

Projected costs for project elements are drawn from various projects of the same type within the Virginia area, or from budget quotes by specific vendors in the industry. The project is not estimated to start for three to five years from the time the master plan was written, to allow time for the City of Fairfax to determine various funding paths. The estimate includes escalation to the estimated mid-point start of construction based on the ENR 10-year running average.

Potential Funding Tools

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

Significant portions of the budget are allocated towards the addition of infrastructure required to support permanent restrooms in the park and additional lighting and power for activities at the plaza and picnic shelters.

The master plan calls for consolidating the four existing playgrounds into one large 25,000 square foot multi-age playground. Costs to replace playground equipment (to meet current safety standards) and playground surfacing that meets safety and accessibility standards is the largest single ticket item within the estimate, at just under two million dollars.

A copy of the full Van Dyck Park Master Plan Cost Estimate is included in Appendix B of this document.

Plan Approval Process

The plan will be submitted for City of Fairfax City Council's approval in the Winter of 2018.