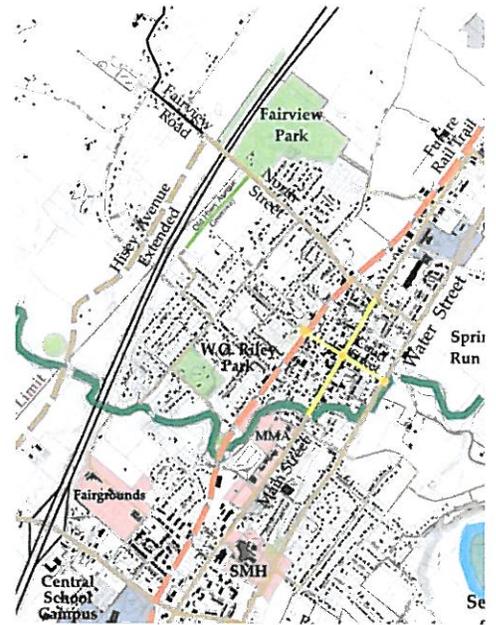


1.0 Introduction

Project History & Purpose

As part of its on-going efforts to provide quality park and recreation opportunities for a growing area population, the Town of Woodstock (Town) purchased an approximately 50.2 acre parcel in 1999 for a new town park site. The parcel is located on the northern town limits on North Street, adjacent to Interstate 81. Both the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the Shenandoah County Indoor/Outdoor Recreation Master Plan called for expansion of town park facilities. Subsequently later that year, the Town conducted a public forum to gather input from local citizens on potential program ideas for that new town park. The forum generated a wide range of ideas for both active and passive recreation facilities for the site. These ideas ranged from sports fields and courts to passive recreation areas and trails to special indoor recreation and aquatics facilities. So extensive were the potential facility suggestions generated in the forum and identified in the County-wide recreation study, that the Town then considered obtaining additional property for the park site.

In 2005, the Town conducted a feasibility study of the Fairview Park site as well as of an adjacent 23 acre parcel to gauge the potential of that parcel's recreation facility capacity when joined with the existing Fairview Park site. This study determined that the additional property was needed to accommodate stated future local park and recreation needs and desires. Later that year the Town submitted an application to the Virginia Land Conservation Fund Grant Program, as administered by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, for a matching grant to purchase the 23 acre parcel. This funding effort was successful and the property was purchased in 2006. Shortly thereafter the Town offered a Request for Proposals for the master planning of the now 73.2 acre park site. The Town selected a multi-disciplinary team to lead master planning effort and its work began in late 2006. An overview of the planning principles and process follows.



What is a Master Plan?

A master plan is a comprehensive guide for the long-term physical development of a large, complex park, based upon: community values & program input, demographic and recreation market characteristics and conditions, and site analyses. More than just a 'map' of planned facilities, the park master plan provides a framework for the phasing and development of the park, a guide and resource for park project funding, and a guide with the ability to accommodate change in recreation demands, trends, development models, and technologies. The Fairview Park Master Plan is intended as a long-range guide for the development of park and recreation facilities and amenities over a 15 to 20 year timeframe.

Park Master Planning Principles

The Steering Committee and consulting team developed a set of guiding principles for the creation of the Fairview Park Master Plan. Various citizens and stakeholders expressed the desire for the park to be more than just an active recreation, sports-oriented park, rather, they wanted it to have quiet seating areas and walking trails as well as natural areas, and to serve a range of user ages and types. These planning principles include:

Strive for Balance: The park master plan and program should strike the proper balance between active and passive uses. The new park environment should serve a variety of needs for a range of users through an equitable balance between nature, walking trails, beautiful landscapes, historic buildings, and active sports facilities, fields and programs.

Respect the Site's Historic & Natural Assets: Park development should avoid, to the greatest extent possible, negatively impacting sensitive environmental and historical/cultural assets on the site. A Low Impact Development (LID) approach will be employed for the development of roadway, parking area and rooftop drainage systems; this approach features bio-swales and special retention-detention facilities for storm water management. The historic Wetzel farmhouse and barn complex should be considered both a 'front door' image and cultural centerpiece for the park.

Understand the Site's Context & Neighbors: Take under consideration the opportunities and potential impacts for master plan development based upon the site's location and adjacent uses. Use natural terrain, sensitive facility placement and landscape buffers to mitigate

negative impacts on neighboring residential areas. Take advantage of the site's visibility from I-81 to showcase key destination recreation facilities.

Connect/Link to the Town: Create a variety of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian connections to the future town-wide trails system. Provide for long-range future vehicular access from the potential new I-81 interchange north of the site and from the east off Swartz Road.

Provide for Flexibility in the Long Range Plan: Create a master plan framework that exhibits flexibility for future programming changes. Provide "opportunity" sites for special, long-range, "partnership projects", such as the ballpark and recreation/wellness center; however, allow for interim uses on those sites and for flexibility for a change of use in the future.

Master Planning Process

At the outset of the study, the master plan team conducted a kick-off meeting with the Town to refine the project approach and assist in setting the general parameters for the creation of a citizen steering committee to direct the preparation of the master plan. The Town Council appointed a group comprised of nine recreation and community stakeholders to the steering committee, including representatives from the adjacent neighborhood and potential recreation partner agencies and institutions. A full list of the Fairview Park Master Plan Steering Committee can be found on the cover sheet of this report.

Following is an outline of the tasks, analyses and products comprised the Fairview Park Master Planning Process:

Phase I. Project Initiation & Analysis, and Town-wide Trails System Concept Plan

The master plan team prepared site surveys, base maps, and geological and wetlands analyses for the site. Research and analysis was conducted in the areas of area-wide demographics, recreational markets, active and passive recreation program elements, and special community-wide recreation facilities. As part of the master planning effort the team was asked to perform additional recreation-oriented studies. First, a Preliminary Town-Wide Trails System Concept Plan was developed. The team also conducted field assessments of existing facilities at W.O. Riley and Riverview Parks. A Steering Committee Worksession, followed by a public forum (4/12/07), were conducted for presentation of Phase I findings and

obtaining input and guidance on the analysis findings and recommendations.

Phase II. Preparation of Alternative Master Plans & Programs

Building upon the preceding programming effort, as well as Steering committee and public forum input, the master plan team prepared two alternative site concept plans. Each plan showed proposed site access and circulation patterns, programmed park and recreation uses and facilities, major trails, parking areas, major landscaping and vegetation save areas, storm water management facilities, and key amenity areas. Special attention was given to the role of the historic Wetzel farmhouse and barn complex, particularly in terms of the adaptive reuse potential of these structures within the new park master plan. Also, the team prepared summary programs for each concept plan. A final version of the Town-Wide Trails Concept Plan was prepared. These plans and programs were presented to the Steering Committee and at a second public input forum (8/16/07).

Phase III. Preparation of the Preferred Master Plan & Program, and Supporting Documentation

Using the direction from the Steering Committee and public forum input, the master plan team prepared a preferred park master plan and program. The plan showed, in a more refined level of detail, proposed site access and circulation patterns, programmed park and recreation uses and facilities, major trails, parking areas, major landscaping and vegetation save areas, storm water management facilities, and key amenity areas. Key park development areas are named and described in a program summary. A concept grading plan was prepared for the plan, along with conceptual-level park development costs. Multiple alternative development programs and development budgets were prepared for wellness/recreation center and ballpark facilities. Partnering and funding opportunities were identified as part of the plan's implementation strategy, and a Seven-Year Action Plan was prepared for Phase 1 and 2 facilities. Once the draft master plan is approved by the Steering Committee, the master planning team will present the plan to the Town Council for its approval.