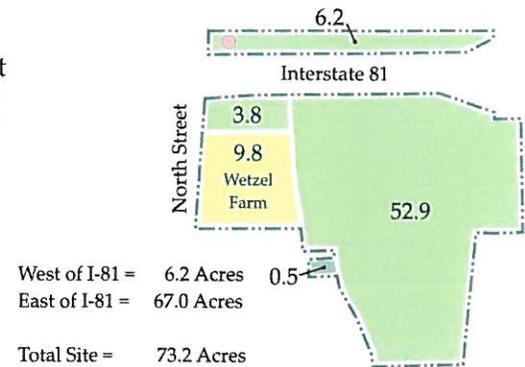


### 3.0 Site Inventory & Analysis

#### Site Context

The Fairview Park site is located at the northern Town limits on the northeast side of North Street (Fairview Road), adjacent to Interstate 81. The site is comprised of 73.2 acres, 67 acres of which lies on the east side of Interstate 81, and 6.2 acres of which lies across Interstate 81, isolated from the main parcel. Inasmuch as the isolated tract is very narrow and deep (approximately 140'W x 1900'D), with a major municipal water tower dominating the North Street frontage and undulating topography, the area was not considered suitable for traditional park use.



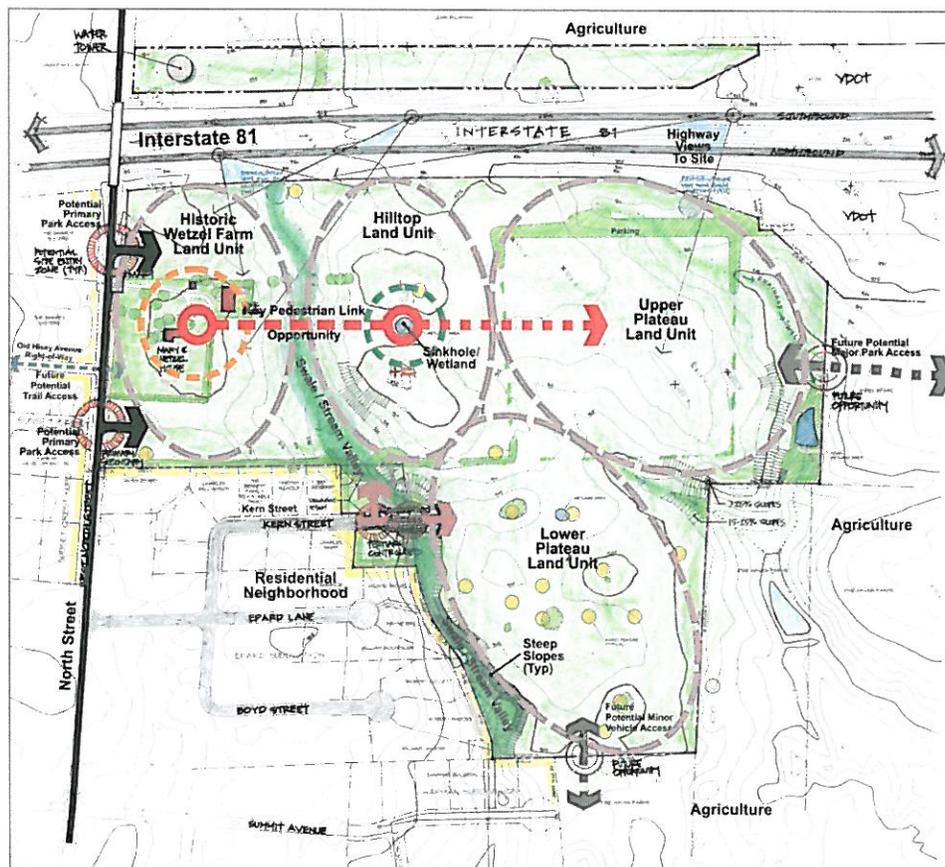
The primary focus of the park master planning process was the 67-acre parcel. Since the site is within the Town limits, it will be served by Town water and sewer. Access is readily available from North Street, which provides 900' of road frontage to the site. It is important to note that there is a planned extension of Hisey Avenue from Route 42 which will connect to North Street just across the interstate from the primary park site; this connection will provide a more direct link to the site from the Route 43 / I-81 interchange. There is also public street access via a stub street, Kern Street, into the eastern part of the site, known as the Epard tract. Since Kern Street is a local residential neighborhood street, it is considered a low-level access which will be controlled by a gate and used infrequently for special and emergency access purposes. (Potential access points are noted on the Summary Site Analysis map.)

The areas neighboring the park site are predominantly agricultural and residential in nature. A neighborhood of single-family detached homes is located adjacent to the southern site boundary, and there are planned residences across North Street to the southeast. A tree row and stream valley define the edge with the adjacent neighborhood. Agricultural uses occur on the adjacent properties to the east, north and northwest, as well as across the interstate. The agricultural areas are located outside the Town limits in Shenandoah County. Interstate 81 is a dominant feature along the northwest edge of the site. Predominant views into the

site from the interstate are from the south-bound lanes, particularly into the northernmost area of the site.

### Summary of Site Opportunities & Constraints

A Summary Site Analysis was prepared as a framework for the development of alternative and refined master plan layouts. This summary analysis, shown below, provides key site-related opportunities and constraints, both natural and man-made, which will influence the location of facilities, access roads and amenity areas within the new park.



### Existing Structures:

The primary structures on the site comprise the historic Mary E. Wetzel house and farmstead (ca, 1890's), which occupies the North Street frontage. The house is a substantial wood frame building in the late-Victorian architectural style. A *Preliminary Assessment of Architectural Significance and Condition with Preservation Recommendations* was prepared for the property by

Massey Maxwell Associates, Historic Preservation Consultants, Strasburg, Virginia (March 17, 1999). Key historical aspects of the farm complex include:

#### Architecture

- Late Victorian house with Italianate features
- Noteworthy exterior & interior features
- Rear wing originally had (vernacular) open porches
- Interior largely intact except for first floor southwest room and kitchen
- Bank barn of same period



#### Conditions

- Good condition overall; some subsidence
- House needs structural investigation

#### Preservation & Historic Features

- Many fine elements for preservation
- Bank barn of same period
- Construction ca. 1895; possibly earlier



The Wetzel farmstead is a key asset. There is a great opportunity to preserve and adaptively reuse the house and the barn within the framework of the new park master plan.

#### Vegetation, Landform & Orientation

The site is primarily open with interim agricultural uses predominating, including hay crops and cattle grazing. A number of mature trees and shrubs surround the Wetzel house and barn and a nice hedgerow defines the old garden plot beside the house. These plants should be preserved to the greatest extent possible during park facility design and development. Tree rows occur along the old fence lines, providing a buffer to many of the adjoining residences. The terrain is gently to moderately rolling with a defining swale and stream valley bisecting the site, located behind the farm building complex and along the residential boundary. This stream valley, gently sloped toward the interstate and more steeply defined along the adjoining neighborhood, provides a connective greensward thorough the site. As noted on the Summary Site Analysis map, the upland areas consist of four land units including: the Historic Wetzel Farm, the Hilltop, the Upper Plateau and the Lower Plateau. These land units provide an organizing framework for master plan layout



alternatives. The Historic Wetzel Farm land unit is the 'front door' image for the park. The Hilltop and Plateau land units can accommodate large-scale recreational facility development opportunities and offer long-range views of the Massanutten Mountain range to the north and northeast.

An opportunity exists for a key pedestrian link between the Wetzel farm complex, the wetland on the Hilltop and future recreational uses on the Upper Plateau.

### **Geotechnical and Wetland Conditions**

The site features a karst landscape that is common to the Shenandoah Valley and particularly this area of Shenandoah County. Karst is a distinctive topography that indicates dissolution of underlying soluble rocks by surface water or ground water and commonly features sinks and crevices and other cavities. Both a Karst Reconnaissance Study and a Wetlands Delineation study were conducted for the park site in late 2006 by ESC Mid-Atlantic, LLC. These studies provided mapping of existing karst and wetland features on the site, and are shown on the Summary Site Analysis map. For the most part the karst features, usually minor to moderate sinks, were clustered within the Lower Plateau land unit, but a few were scattered elsewhere on site. Particularly interesting is a sink that contains a (regulated) wetland area, located on the hilltop in the center of the site. This feature will be preserved and protected. An old farm pond on the north boundary of the site is a regulated wetland, but as a man-made wetland can be adapted for use as a storm water management facility. The master plan principle of employing Low Impact Development techniques, in concert with avoiding the locating of major facilities on these features, will minimize the environmental impacts of park development on the site.

