

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural
Activities
and
The Office of Historic Alexandria

Fort Ward Park Update



City Council Work Session
May 26, 2009



Fort Ward Park – “Now”



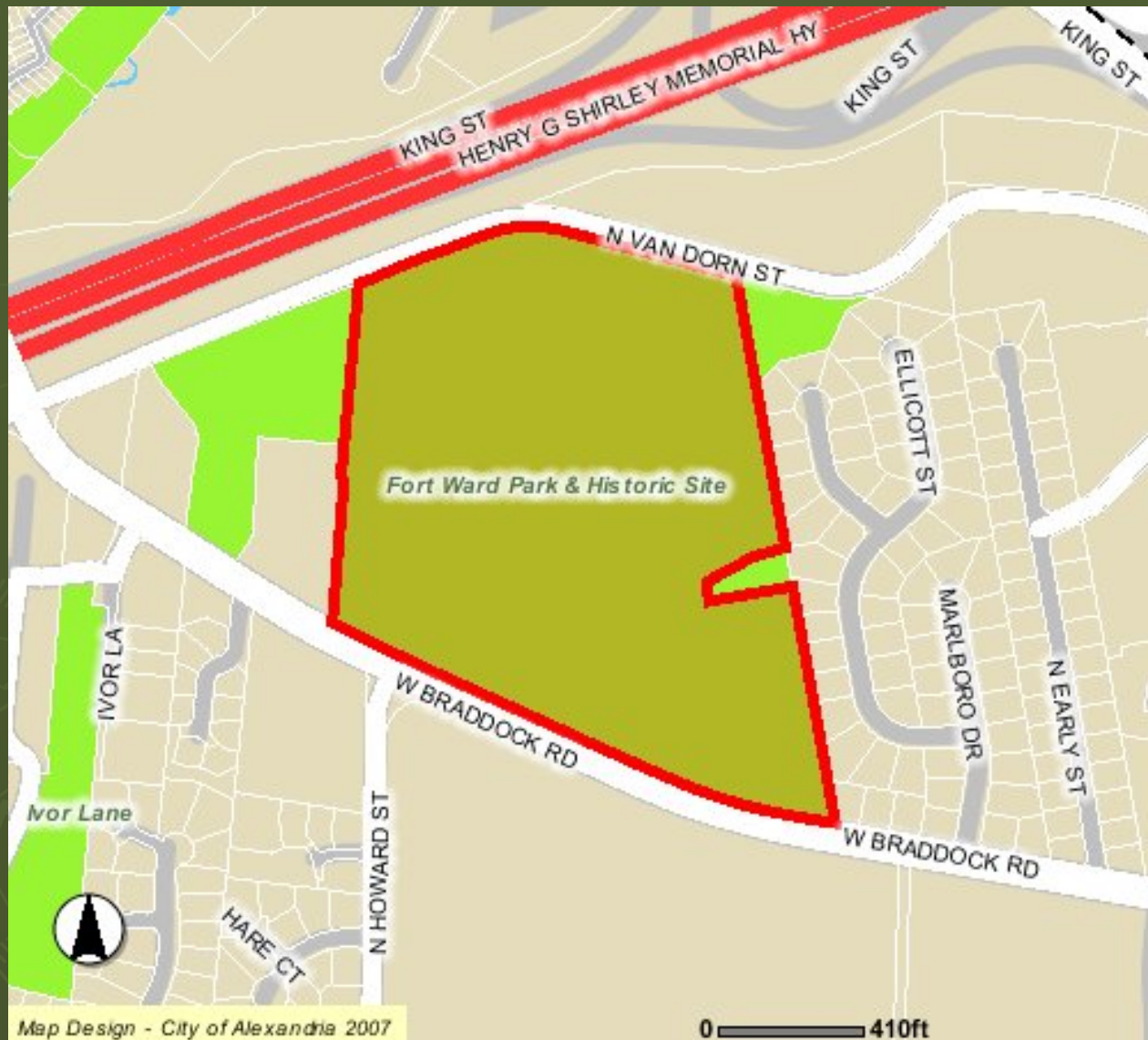
Fort Ward Park – “Then”



Fort Ward – Pictures from the Past



Fort Ward Park



FORT WARD PARK



Fort Ward Park

- ▶ 37 Acre Park
- ▶ Museum and Fort
- ▶ Adjacent 5 Acre Athletic Field/Tennis Court Area
- ▶ 115 Parking Spaces
- ▶ 64 Picnic Tables, 1 Shelter, 9 Seating Benches, 34 Trash Cans
- ▶ Dog Exercise Area
- ▶ Walking Path
- ▶ Amphitheater
- ▶ Restrooms

Community Meetings 2009



City of Alexandria, VA

City Hall, 301 King St. Room 3500, Alexandria, VA 22314

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12, 2009
PIO#078-09/jlh

For More Information, Contact:

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City of Alexandria Schedules Community Meeting to Present Draft Action Plan on Fort Ward Park

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and the Office of Historic Alexandria invite the public to attend the third community meeting regarding a draft action plan to address community concerns about current facilities and operations at Fort Ward Park, located at 4301 West Braddock Road. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria of T. C. Williams High School, 3330 King St.

City staff will present findings generated from the two previous meetings, and the public will have the opportunity to comment on the draft action plan. Residents unable to attend the meeting can view the presentation online beginning Thursday, March 19, and may submit written comments to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Attention: Laura Durham, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314, or by e-mailing laura.durham@alexandriava.gov. The deadline for written comments is Friday, March 27.

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the City's Human Rights Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation or to request materials in an alternative format, please call Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, at 703.838.5095, ext. 350 (TTY 703.838.4902), or e-mail laura.durham@alexandriava.gov.

www.alexandriava.gov

February 18, 2009
March 4, 2009
March 18, 2009

Community Meetings 2009

- ▶ Group Discussions
- ▶ Priority Exercise



Community Meeting Findings

Fort Ward Park Priorities and Issues Identified by Community

HISTORIC/CULTURAL USES	#	PARK OPERATIONS	#	ACTIVE RECREATIONAL USES	#	PASSIVE/CASUAL USES	#	ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURAL RESOURCES	#	OTHER	#
1. African American History		1. Maintenance Facility		1. Picnics		1. Pedestrian Uses		1. Arboretum		1. Park Planning	
a) Signage of historical African American community, historic markers	19	a) Move maintenance yard, but do not replace w/ additional picnic or public access area	8	a) Noise- Noise problems with picnics, parties. Prohibit/ban amplified sound.	41	a) Maintain walking/running paths	6	a) Re-establish arboretum at Fort Ward as part of master plan	10	a) Develop Mission Statement	10
b) Restoration of community graves and artifacts	15	b) Regular cleaning and upkeep. Additional screening and buffer.	4	b) Alcohol- prohibit/ban alcohol /ABC permits	17	b) Walking Park is a plus	3	b) Master plan for Arboretum--include education and plant collections	12	b) Empower Working Group/Committee: ID short /long term goals, managed growth/stewardship	9
c) Exhibit for museum	15	c) Gravesites located inside yard, overlaps w/ yard, does facility need to be moved?	3	c) Overcrowding--control, reduce picnics, reservations, group size-no large groups.	15	c) Pedestrian/vehicular are shared-- safety concerns. Have a pedestrian only 'loop'	3	2. Trees and Landscaping		c) Postpone facilities plan until master plan complete	6
d) African American History--Input and Research	11	d) Programming for Nursery--Now and when its gone	2	d) Limit/eliminate picnics in areas adjacent to residents	5	d) Identify walking and driving road	2	a) Replant trees lost to attrition	6	d) Rebalance use, ID how Park is used/under/ over utilized areas, prioritize use- passive/active	6
		e) Nursery used as staging than for growing.	1	e) Noise abatement w/ adequate staffing on weekends	4	e) Sidewalks	1	b) Trees/arboretum are non-existent	5	e) Communications w/ Public- Open Comm. w/ neigh.	5
2. Identification of Historic Areas		2. Rehabilitate Restrooms	14	f) Temporarily stop/reduce picnics to assess needs and to allow areas to regenerate	2	2. Parking availability for casual use	6	c) Azalea beds, festival	6	f) No changes in Park without public process or input, esp. adjacent neighborhoods	4
a) Grave sites, Pre-post Civil War, African American History, Regional significance, others	17			g) Increase reservation fees	1			d) Tree work, maintain existing azaleas, plants	3		
b) Identify w/ signage- visible and clear	11	3. Security		h) Requirements for reservations-Alexandria residents/non-residents	1	3. Other		e) Document trees/historic trees	1	2. Volunteer Ideas	
c) Identify areas/gravesites through research, GPS	8	a) Security for Park	5	2. Parking/Vehicles		a) More Historical emphasis	3			a) Users take home their own trash -- "leave no trace"	5
3. Market/ Promote "Park Story"/ History		b) Closing times/Gates	3	a) Parking issues--spillover into adjacent neighborhoods from events/picnics	7	b) More passive use	2	3. Drainage		b) Coordinate volunteer corp. for park	2
a) Recognize historic significance of site. Valuable levels within park.	10	c) Police	1	b) Vehicular traffic--eliminate vehicles or relocate?	4			a) Drainage along east property line/ throughout park	4	c) Community Service Plan	1
b) Tours: African American Community, Oral History, Walking Tour, Cell Phone technology	8			c) Control access into park	4			b) No more paving, impervious surfaces	4	d) Adopt a Garden to beautify	1
c) Begin planning, preparations for 150th Anniversary of the Civil War.	2	4. Communications/Assistance		d) No additional parking	2			c) Utilize stormwater as irrigation around loop	1	e) Users donate time	1
d) Appoint a committee to begin short/long term interpretive plan for 150th Civil War Anniv.	3	a) Who do you go to? What is the process for contacting authorities?	4	3. Special Events						3. Misc.	
e) History needs to be more accessible	1	b) Staff not on duty to help with concerns/ needs	2	a) Large events, such as Jazz Festival- not historic negative impact, unrelated to history	4					a) Drug Use/ Crime, Rats/Vermin, Parking (and speeding) for St. S./St. A.	3
f) Interpretive program	1	5. Cemeteries/Gravesites		4. Facilities						b) Pay Phone on Westside	3
4. Interpretive Trail-- of cultural, natural, Af. American resources	16	a) Damage to grave sites	3	a) No additional pavilions	5					c) Park is a regional attraction and community asset	1
5. Resource Management		b) Better maintenance of Cemetery	2	b) Lighting--lights are on and park is empty	3					d) Utility survey needed	1
a) Preserve history in museum. Concerns about flooding in basement.	3	c) Vegetative Screening	1	c) Rehab/Upgrade Amphitheatre	1						
b) Message to "respect park and its' resources" (Picnic users)	3	6. Park Amenities		d) Electrical Outlets for Special Events (controlled)	1						
c) Assess if historic and cultural resources are compatible w/recreation use	2	a) Site amenities/furnishings should be appropriate for a historic area.	4	5. Management							
d) Mission Statement to define Parks historical purpose/importance.	2	b) No Loud signage, etc..	3	a) Determine max. limit to balance use and historic resources	3						
e) Go back to the original concept of park-historic with azalea beds, passive uses.	2	7. Other Maintenance/Operations									
		a) Leaf blower noise--why are leaves picked up?	1								
		b) Incorporate green practices in maintenance	1								
		c) City vehicles take up visitor parking spaces	1								
		d) Do not increase parking.	1								

☐ Immediate & Short term actions
 # #of responses from priority exercise

Dated 3/18/09

Community Findings - Key Issue Areas

- ▶ Historic and Cultural
- ▶ Park Operations and Maintenance
- ▶ Active Recreation
- ▶ Passive/Casual Use
- ▶ Environmental/Natural Uses

Historical/Cultural Uses

- ▶ African American History of Park
- ▶ Identification of Historic Areas
- ▶ Promotion of Park History
- ▶ Interpretive Trail
- ▶ Resource Management



Park Operations and Maintenance

- ▶ Maintenance Facility
- ▶ Rehabilitate Restrooms
- ▶ Communications/Assistance
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Cemeteries/Gravesites
- ▶ Park Amenities



Active Recreational Uses

- ▶ Picnics
- ▶ Parking/Vehicles
- ▶ Special Events
- ▶ Available Facilities
- ▶ Site Management



Passive/Casual Uses

- ▶ Pedestrian Paths
- ▶ Parking Availability for Casual Use



Environmental/Natural Resources

- ▶ Arboretum
- ▶ Trees and Landscaping
- ▶ Drainage



Stormwater drainage pattern

Other Issues

- ▶ Park Planning
- ▶ Volunteer Ideas
- ▶ Miscellaneous Concerns: Drug Use, Crime, Rats, Pay Phones, Utilities

Balancing User Needs



Balancing User Needs

- ▶ Interim actions and plan for Spring/Summer 2009 season
- ▶ RPCA and OHA coordinated future park planning efforts

Spring 2009 Actions

Park Management

- Park manager on duty (weekends and holidays)
- Picnic reservation system
 - - 4 hour block rentals with deposit
 - - defined interim park capacity, 350 maximum
- Improved signage for alcohol and noise
- Removal of picnic area 1 shelter and rental use

Spring 2009 Actions

► Park Operations and Maintenance:

- Relocation of some of the horticultural and maintenance operations,
- Clean-up of maintenance yard,
- Seasonal weekend assistant park manager added,
- Defined maintenance hut use,
- New trash can and pick-up program for museum use
- Amphitheater area used for maintenance operations,
- Planned protection of known grave sites and stones,
- Drafting MOU between ROCA and OHA – working group meeting now, interim “no ground disturbance” policy,
- Defined interim general mowing, maintenance and repair program

Spring 2009 Gravesite Protection

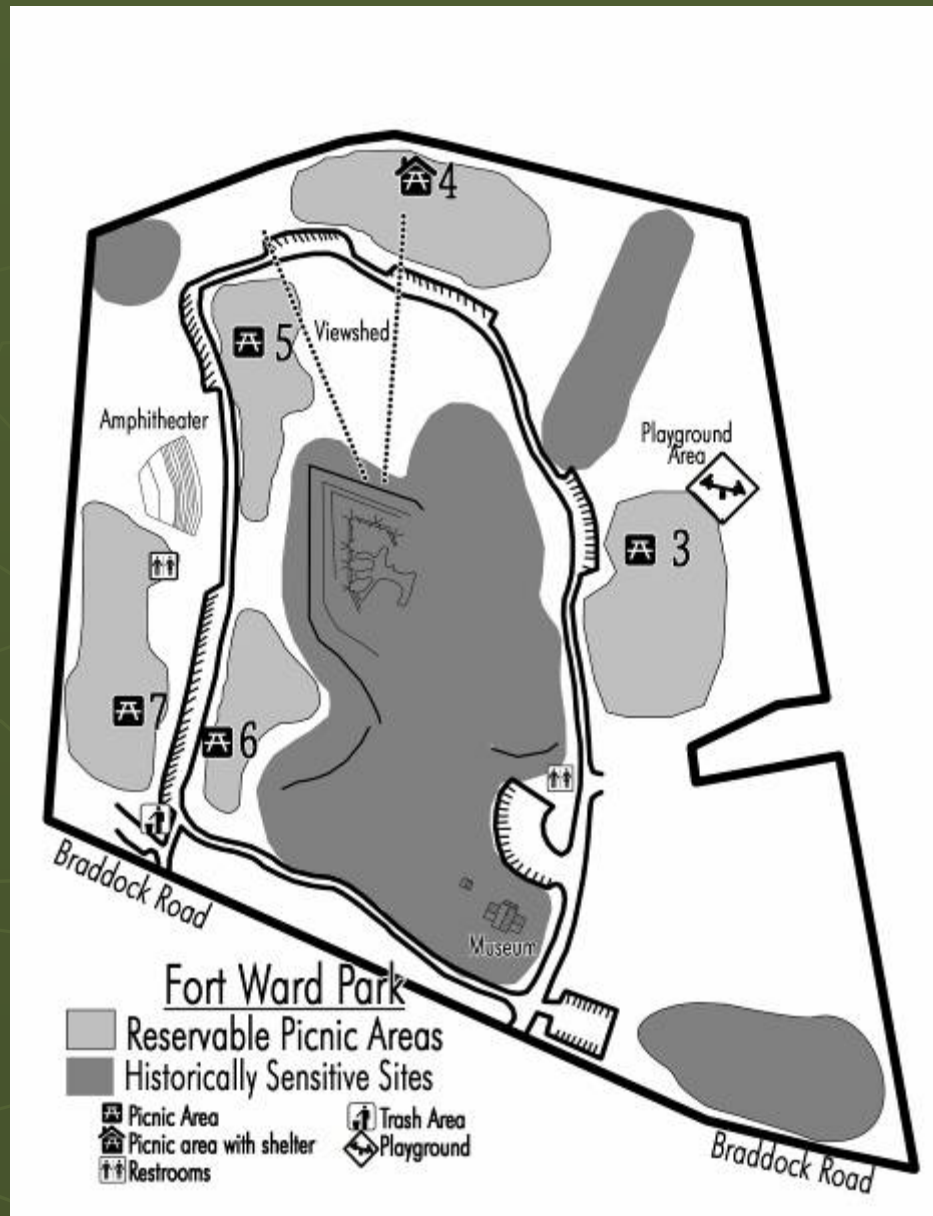


Gravesites April 2009



Gravesites May 2009 – roped off

Spring 2009 Reservation Map



Park Entrance

Spring 2009



Park Entrance

Spring 2009



Parking/Traffic Improvements



Maintenance Yard



January 2009



May 2009

Maintenance Yard



January 2009



May 2009

Maintenance Yard



January 2009



May 2009

Picnic Area 1



Spring 2008



Spring 2009

Picnic Area 4



April 2008



May 2009

Picnic Area 5



April 2008



May 2009

Fort Ward Athletic Field



April 2008



Spring 2009

Conclusion

Next steps

- ▶ Fort Ward Park and Museum work group – OHA
- ▶ OHA cultural resource investigation – summer graduate research intern
- ▶ Archeological phase one survey to begin FY2010
- ▶ RPCA gather data on park use throughout 2009 season
- ▶ Potential establishment of a stakeholders' advisory group
- ▶ Future master planning effort for the park

Thank you

