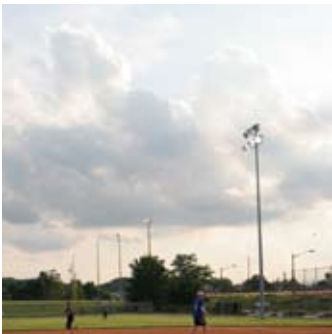
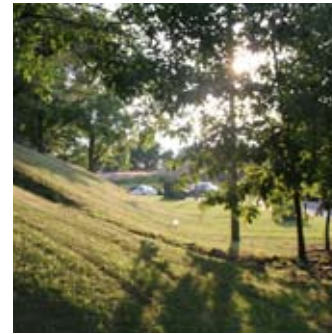


JOSEPH HENSLEY PARK





Background

Joseph Hensley Park (21.66 acres) is the southernmost citywide park in Alexandria and is located in the Eisenhower Corridor area. The Park is partially located in the flood basin of Cameron Run, a tributary stream of the Potomac River flowing through the north of the Park. Hensley is different from the rest of Alexandria's citywide parks because it is remotely located, apart from residential neighborhoods. The Capital Beltway, Eisenhower Avenue, WMATA Metrorail and CSX railroad track bound the Park.

While little is known about the history of the Hensley site, the historic Claremont Plantation was located only 500 feet south from the east end of the Park. Benjamin Dulany, a Revolutionary War loyalist to Great Britain and friend of George Washington, built Claremont Plantation in the late 18th century. The plantation passed through several hands including those of John Mason, the youngest son of George Mason, before serving as a small pox hospital for Union forces during the Civil War. In the second half of the 19th century, a railroad line was constructed along the northwest side of the Park, where the metro currently lies.

The City acquired a 13-acre portion of Hensley Park in 1977 with the assistance of a U.S. Land & Water Conservation Fund Act grant to supplement the use of City park bond funds. Today, Joseph Hensley Park is a destination park predominantly used for sports activities. The Park is named for the late Joseph Hensley, a former Director of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, who was highly involved in the development of the site's current uses. Hensley Park is home to a number of different recreational activities taking place throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall including Alexandria's Co-ed and Men's Softball, Bishop Ireton High School JV Softball and Lacrosse, DC Social Softball, Goombay Kickball, and several adult leagues sponsored by different area organizations.

Due to Hensley's secluded location and the heavy vehicle traffic at its borders, the majority of Park users drive to the site. There are no welcoming features placed at the entrance to the Park and its tall fence discourages visitors who might be interested in spending unprogrammed time in the Park. Furthermore, because of the site's remote location, there have been past security concerns that prompted the City to lock the Park when programmed sports activities are not going on, prohibiting open unorganized play.

Team Players at Hensley



On July 25, two different offices of the National Credit Union Administration suited up for a competitive game of baseball at Hensley Park. One side wore Chicago Cubs paraphernalia while the other sported gear of the District's own Washington Nationals. Since it was the offices' first annual game, the stakes were high for both teams. Co-workers crowded around the dugouts to cheer for their peers on the field and many gathered around table with food and drinks. Ralph Monaco and Jerry Poliquin, who both work for the Administration, speculated that the game would be one of many considering how much fun everyone was having.

The Park also has topographic challenges. The sports fields are divided amongst three levels, with the two easternmost fields separated from the restrooms, pavilion and third ballfield by a steep set of steps. The soccer field is at another higher level, surrounded by a fence with a locked gate. The soccer field does not have pedestrian connection to the restrooms or the rest of the Park. The lack of accessible ramps and paths make access throughout the park difficult and dangerous, particularly for users with disabilities.

Considering its location near two major roadways and its distance from the surrounding residential areas, Hensley is best suited for planned sports games and other events. Apart from sport activities, visitors occasionally rent the pavilion for events and make use of the picnic area. However, these pavilion activities are generally associated with events also scheduled at the ballfields and are seldom used for independent events. The pavilion is too small to host larger groups or festival activities. Because of minimal tree canopy in the Park, there is little shade other than the picnic pavilion.

The Park's fields and amenities need improvement in order to support their programmed uses in the long-term. The fields all suffer from poor turf and drainage. Many of the park's amenities, such as backstops and benches, are in need of replacement or repair. Hensley's existing 78 parking spaces are also insufficient to accommodate the flux of weekend visitors who drive to the park, and often park on grassy areas when paved spots are unavailable.

Alexandria Soccer Association and other partner organizations have stopped frequently using the site, decreasing the potential revenue the Department could gain from the fields. The site conditions also discourage park users who wish to passively use the sports fields and open space.¹

¹ In response to the various needs at Hensley Park, the City has already allocated

Community Feedback

Despite efforts to obtain community feedback, including online and hard copy-survey distribution and communication through athletic coaches, Park Planning received only seven completed surveys for Hensley Park. There were no participants for the Hensley workshop. Therefore, Park Planning relied on information provided by the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB) members for feedback on Hensley Park.

The YSAB comments and comments from the seven completed surveys included the following:

- Address drainage issues on all three fields
- Provide synthetic turf on the upper field and improve parking
- Add more trees
- Improve parking
- Improve the turf condition of the softball fields

Staff also heard comments from groups that rent Boothe Park picnic shelter stating that they prefer Boothe over Hensley because Hensley does not have a playground or other activities for kids to use during picnic or family gatherings.

\$175,000 of a development contribution to be used towards improvement projects at Hensley as a part of the Fiscal Year 2012-2021 Capital Improvement Program.



The Plan

KEYED LEGEND

1. UPGRADE FIELDS WITH STANDARD DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS OR OTHER GOVERNING BODY FOR ADULT SPORTS
2. REPLACE, UPGRADE, AND REORGANIZE SPORT LIGHTING TO ACCOMMODATE NEW FIELDS
3. CONVERT SOCCER FIELD TO ARTIFICIAL TURF AND REPLACE SLOPE WITH RETAINING WALL & ACCESS RAMPS
4. EXPAND AND INCREASE CAPACITY OF PARKING LOT
5. FORMALIZE DRIVEWAY WITH TURNAROUND AND ACCESSIBLE PARKING
6. RELOCATE RESTROOMS CENTRAL TO ENTRY AREAS
7. PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE RAMP TO CONNECT UPPER AND LOWER AREAS
8. PROVIDE NEW SHELTER, PLAY FEATURES, MULTI-USE COURTS, AND ADULT FITNESS EQUIPMENT
9. PLANT NEW TREES TO REPLACE TREES REMOVED IN FIELD REORIENTATIONS AND EXPANSIONS
10. PROVIDE NEW PARKING LOT
11. EXTEND DRIVEWAY TO ALLOW ONE-WAY TRAFFIC EXIT AND ADDITIONAL WEEKEND PARALLEL PARKING
12. PROVIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT PARK ENTRANCE
13. RELOCATE EQUIPMENT STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE AREA
14. PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE WALKWAY TO PAVILION AND ACCESSIBLE VIEWING AREAS AT STAIRS
- A. **ALTERNATE PLAN:** BUILD INDOOR ATHLETIC FIELD HOUSE AT FIELD #2



GRAPHIC KEY

	HARD TRAILS		ENTRANCE PLAZAS		PARK BOUNDS		MULTI-USE COURTS		PLAY FEATURE AREA		ADULT FITNESS EQUIPMENT AREAS		ATHLETIC TURF
	STAIRS												

Recommendations & Implementation Strategy



The current drainage issues at the ballfields cause the infield mix to wash off into the parking lot and surrounding areas after poor weather conditions.



After poor weather, water saturates the soccer field.

1

Upgrade fields to standard dimensions of National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) or other governing body for adult sports.

We can maximize use of the baseball diamonds by upgrading them consistent with standards of NFHS or adult sport governing bodies. This will make Hensley a choice venue for official high school and other competitive leagues.

ESTIMATED COST: \$900,000 - \$1,200,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

2

Replace, upgrade, and reorganize sport lighting to accommodate new ballfields

Along with the reconfiguration and upgrade of the baseball diamonds and rectangular field, reconfiguring the current sports lighting will help ensure optimal use and safety at Hensley.

ESTIMATED COST: \$60,000 - \$80,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

3

Convert soccer field to synthetic turf and install access ramps

The soccer field at Hensley is in such poor condition that organizations such as the Alexandria Soccer Association no longer rent it, despite the field having lights. Installing artificial turf will allow for increased use of what once was a popular facility. Access ramps will make it easier for players and spectators to safely access the site.

ESTIMATED COST: \$1,500,000 - \$1,800,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

4

Expand western parking lot

The current parking lot near Hensley's rectangular field cannot accommodate all of the visitors during the field's heaviest use. The parking ratio standard for rectangular fields in RPCA's Athletic Facilities Allocation Policy suggests 40 legal parking spaces. The current lot holds 36 spaces; the proposed lot would hold 51 spaces, 3 of which would be disabled spaces, including one van accessible space.

ESTIMATED COST: \$275,000 - \$325,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 Years

5

Formalize driveway with turnaround and disabled parking

Formalizing this driveway will make it easier for maintenance staff to access the West baseball diamond and the facilities surrounding it. It will also provide an accessible path to Hensley's restrooms.

ESTIMATED COST: \$420,000 - \$545,000

PRIORITY: High

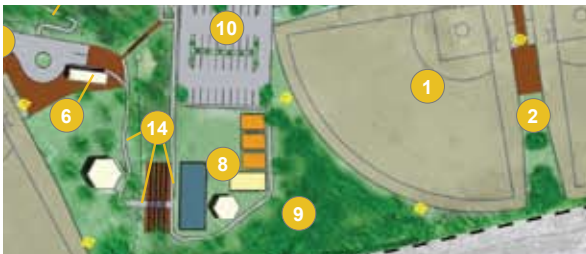
PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



Though recently painted, the Hensley Restrooms are inefficient and reaching the end of their useful life span.



Many community members who rent pavilions for parties said they prefer not to rent Hensley because it lacks courts and play features for families.



Re-orienting field #2 will provide space for new park features, additional trees, and a parking lot.

6

Relocate restrooms central to entry areas

A new restroom facility would be more efficient, accessible, and sanitary for park users. The existing building is reaching the end of its useful life span.

ESTIMATED COST: \$312,750 - \$350,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

7

Provide accessible ramp to connect upper and lower areas

This accessible ramp will create a stronger connection between the different facilities at Hensley and a safer, more convenient route for park users to move to and from the upper and lower areas of the park. The current restrooms are inaccessible from the lower portion of the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$175,000 - \$225,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

8

Provide new play features, multi-use courts, and adult fitness equipment

While Hensley currently has a number of sports fields, it lacks facilities for non-team recreation. A new set of recreational facilities will increase the different types of uses at Hensley and provide recreational opportunities to a much larger group of residents. It will also provide activities for groups renting the picnic shelter. The proposed hard surface sport court can be used to host events, which can be viewed from the existing built in seating.

ESTIMATED COST: \$104,000 - \$146,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

9

Plant new trees to replace trees removed in field reorientations and expansions

The proposed new trees of appropriate native species will enhance the natural environment at Hensley. The trees will provide shade in the park and bolster the buffer between the Park and the Capital Beltway. They will also expand the City's tree canopy, as recommended in the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

ESTIMATED COST: \$55,000 - \$67,000 PRIORITY: Medium PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

10

Provide new parking lot

The current parking situation at Hensley cannot sufficiently accommodate visitors during sports games and, with the addition of new recreational facilities, Hensley will undoubtedly be in greater need of additional parking. The proposed parking lot can accommodate 30 spaces, which, in addition to the other parking spaces in the Park, will meet the needs of the ballfields. The current lot includes 22 spaces; the proposed lot would hold 46 spaces.

ESTIMATED COST: \$375,000 - \$440,000 PRIORITY: High PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



When park visitors can't find parking spaces they park on the grass and on the fields, causing further damage to the surfaces and blocking the park emergency lanes.

11

Extend driveway to allow one-way traffic exit and additional weekend parallel parking

The extension of the driveway with a clear park entrance and exit will create improved circulation for vehicular traffic during times of peak use and provide greater access to emergency vehicles.

ESTIMATED COST: \$220,000 - \$270,000

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years

12

Provide safety improvements to park entrance and remove locked gate

Park users predominantly drive to Hensley for programmed activities. However, the addition of courts, fitness equipment, and play features will create more opportunities for non-programmed recreation that will in turn encourage more people to walk, run or bike to Hensley. A safer and readily identifiable entrance is needed to accommodate vehicles and pedestrians accessing the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$6,200 - \$8,500

PRIORITY: High

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 3-10 years



The Park entrance is insignificant and easy to miss. When the park is not programmed the swing gate is locked.

13

Relocate equipment storage and maintenance area

The proposed remote maintenance and storage area will include a shelter for park equipment and office structure for staff, two features that will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of Park Operations staff in their work to maintain the park.

ESTIMATED COST: \$79,000 - \$125,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ years

14

Renovate and provide accessible viewing area at outdoor steps

The steps at the bottom of the slope dividing the upper and lower areas of the Park are a significant asset to the Park. These steps and walkway will provide excellent accessible seating for play feature or court spectators.

ESTIMATED COST: \$23,000 - \$38,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ years



The existing stairs serve as a viewing area and social gathering space.

A

ALTERNATE PLAN: Build an indoor athletic field house

An 80,000 square foot indoor athletic field house and associated parking could fit in the existing footprint of field #2. At this size, the center of the field house could include an artificial rectangular field with a 60 foot ceiling clearance. The field could be divisible into halves and fourths for sideline-to-sideline practice and games.

ESTIMATED COST: \$2,880,000 - \$3,520,000

PRIORITY: Medium

PROPOSED TIMEFRAME: 10+ years

The proposed timeline for each recommendation considers the project priority, the project cost with relation to the Department budget and contingent upon the Capital Improvement Plan, and the construction sequencing of recommendation amongst other park projects.

Note: Alternative Field House is not included in grand total. If pursued, the grand total would range from \$7,500,000 to \$9,500,000