

Goat Hill Park

History and Character

Goat Hill Park a 2.5 acres site dedicated to the City in 1953 as part of the Warwick portion of the Hume Estate for the purpose of public use.

The park is characterized by three different area. The portion along Kennedy Street holds a playground with standard equipment and rubberized surface poured along the hillside. The playground is well used by children in the Warwick Village neighborhood of the City (image top left, below).



A chain link fence separates the playground and the forested area in the center of the park (image bottom left). While the forested area had previously be infested with invasive species and vines, recent efforts by the Natural Resources Division staff have enhanced and managed the natural area on the naturally steep slope above the playground: removing annual and perennial weeds, non-native invasive woody shrubs and trees (i.e., Callery Pear), and Kudzu; planting many appropriate native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees (i.e., Sweet Crabapple,



Pasture Rose, Sassafras, etc.); sowing pounds of native grass and wildflower seed; and installing “Native Plant Conservation Zone” signs. Southern Red Oak (*Quercus falcata*) is the dominant tree on the dry to mesic, southwest-facing, gravelly ridge and upper slope, along with Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*), Post Oak (*Quercus stellata*), Chestnut Oak (*Quercus montana*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and Mockernut Hickory (*Carya alba*). The largest and oldest of these are probably relics of the old Hume estate.

Access to the forested area from the playground is limited. There is an unofficial trail (shown right) leading from the playground through the woods, though it is steep and eroded. While it is clear that children frequently trek and play between the



two areas, A more secure trail system would allow easier access through the park and between Hickory and Kennedy Streets.

At the top portion of the park, behind the house on Hickory Street, is an open lawn (shown right). The lawn primarily serves as an extension to the backyards of these homes. The hill in the park provides good sledding conditions in the winter and draws children from the broader east end of Alexandria. Access to this area is limited. There is a public right of way between two homes leading to the open lawn, however the entrances are unmarked and feel private (image above).



Community Feedback

In Fall 2014, staff collected community feedback to understand how the Park is used and how it could be improved in the future. The following information summarizes what we heard through an online survey, community workshop, and “graffiti board” in the park. Over 270 people responded to the survey in total, thirteen of which were specific to Goat Hill Park. Staff used the collected information to develop draft park plans. In Spring 2015, the community provided feedback on the draft park plan (see appendix) through online surveys, park signs and public meetings. Based on information from the Spring input phase, staff updated the plans to best represent current and future community needs.

In 10 years I would like this Park to...

(Top 3 rankings shown; based on a weighted score)

1. Be a safe place for children to explore
2. Provide opportunity to explore nature
3. Be a place to relax

Existing Conditions



What would you like done with the playground?

Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it as is	0	0%
Enhance it	1	17%
Transform it	5	83%

Explain

The playground is unusable on hot afternoons. Provide additional shade
 Add more baby swings, there is almost always a line.
 Not best playground, but ok
 the Hill is mostly avoided

What would you like done with the natural area?

Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it as is	3	30%
Enhance it	5	50%
Transform it	2	20%

Explain

The slope between the playground and the forest is degrading.
 Make more of a playground
 Poison ivy - unsafe to hike through
 Make it more clear that there are trails in the natural area; perhaps label or sign marking a path or two to the grassy area. Most people have no idea that the natural area is part of the park (including me until I just saw the map!). Would be a great wilderness resource for parents with young kids (these are typically the folks I see at the park).

What would you like done with the open lawn?

Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it as is	3	38%
Enhance it	3	38%
Transform it	2	25%

Explain

??? How to access???
 More!
 more playground space

What is currently NOT in the Park that you would like to see there?

Response

A water fountain
 Crosswalks, fencing around the entire park.
 Labels for the paths/trails in the nature area.
 Water fountain
 safe trails - free of poison ivy
 It could benefit from a 2nd baby swing, and perhaps a path so that people can explore the nature area? I like the nature area largely as is, but it is pretty un-useable. A small path could be nice for exploring.
 other than the playground, the space seems not accessible. Make it more accessible and welcoming

How do you get to this Park?

Value	Count	Percent
Walk	13	100%
Bike (personal)	0	0%
Bike (Capital Bikeshare)	0	0%
Drive	0	0%
Public Transit	0	0%
Carpool	0	0%

How far do you typically travel to visit this park?

Value	Count	Percent
Less than 1/2 mile	9	69%
Between 1/2 mile to 1 mile	4	31%
Between 1-2 miles	0	0%
Over 2 miles	0	0%

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Park?

Response

We love this park - it's well set up for kids.
 add more play structures
 I really like that the park has a gate so my toddler can't run out, and I like that the playground's "bridge" has a safety rail.
 I love this park - it is challenging for kids b/c of the hills and rock climbing - in a good way. And it is a nice location - good for Del Ray, Warwick Villiage, and all the new apartment buildings. I also like that it has a gate - for kids, that is essential. (the one on Del Ray and Commonwealth REALLY needs a gate to be safe for toddlers!)
 The surrounding sidewalks are difficult to traverse with a stroller because the telephone poles are in the middle of them.

Have any of the following circumstances prevented you from visiting this Park? (check all that apply)

Value	Count	Percent
I am physically limited from walking	0	0%
There is no pedestrian/bike friendly	1	25%
I have concerns about crime or persc	2	50%
There is not enough parking	0	0%
There is nothing in the Park that inter	1	25%

How often do you visit this park?

Value	Count	Percent
Daily	1	8%
Weekly	7	54%
Monthly	5	39%
Yearly	0	0%

Comments from Community Workshop held on October 25, 2014

- Preserve playground
- Preserve wooded area
- Enhance crosswalk on Kennedy St. to playground
- Improve visibility and accessibility from Hickory St.
- Improve trails. Could also make neighbors less nervous about why people are back there
- Improve access to wooded areas - maybe a sign or series of arrows
- Remove kudzu in wooded areas
- Tidy up the hill/keep natural area
- Mini dog park
- More park equipment like: monkey bars (x3), slides, swings (x4), merry-go-round, spider web
- Equipment for older kids
- Basketball court (x2)
- Equipment for jumping
- Four squares
- Climbing structures or trees (x3)
- Zip lines (x2)

Draft Plan Feedback

In Spring 2015, the community provided feedback on the draft park plan through online surveys (see appendix for full results), park signs and public meetings. Based on information from the Spring input phase, staff updated the plans to best represent current and future community needs. Only minor text changes were made to the Goat Hill Park Plan.

Graffiti Sign

A “graffiti sign” in the Park had a marker attached and asked park users to write down what they would like their park to look like in the future. Park users recorded the following comments between September to November 2014



Improvement Recommendations



Implementation Strategy

This plan uses citizen input and considers other external considerations to determine how to address park improvements incrementally over time. Most of the recommendations in the plan can be implemented independent of other projects as funding is available, whether through city or non-city funds. The cost estimates (in 2015 dollars) do not include operating costs. Prior to the implementation of any recommendation, operating costs, if any, must be considered.

The priority for each recommendation is shown as “low,” “medium,” or “high.” RPCA determined these rankings based upon (1) park user safety, (2) community prioritization feedback and the results of the 2011 and 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, (3) life span of the existing conditions, (4) potential for non-city funding sources, (5) level of user impact, (6) relationship to other projects.

Goat Hill Park				
#	Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Dept Lead
1	Improve access from Kennedy St	Low	5,000-7,500	RPCA
2	Formalize Park Entrance as a nature trail at Hickory St	Medium	7,500-10,000	RPCA
3	Eradicate invasive species and restore natural area	High	15,000 - 25,000	RPCA
4	Continue native plant restoration	Medium	5,000 - 10,000	RPCA
5	Conserve remnant trees	High	5,000 - 7,500	RPCA
6	Construct nature trail	High	10,000-12,500	RPCA
7	Seek partner agreements with neighbors on park plantings	Medium	N/A	RPCA
8	Replace chain link fence with a wooden split rail fence	Low	10,000-20,000	RPCA
9	Address erosion and drainage concerns	Medium	100,000 allowance	RPCA/TES

2015 Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan: Appendix



Neighborhood Parks Plan

Goat Hill Park

Community Feedback, Fall 2014



The Division of Park Planning, Design, and Capital Development is currently planning for the City's existing Neighborhood Parks, which we characterize as being 0.5 - 10 acres with a service area of up to 0.5 miles. The results of this plan will help determine budgeting priorities and recommendations for both short and long-term incremental improvements, ensuring that neighborhood parks serve Alexandria's needs now and into the future.

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Goat Hill Park

Improvement Recommendations

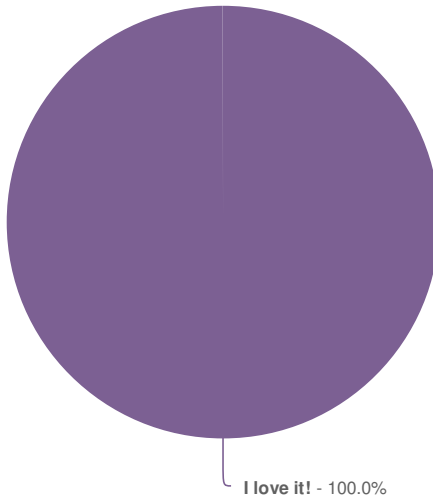
Draft (Spring 2015)





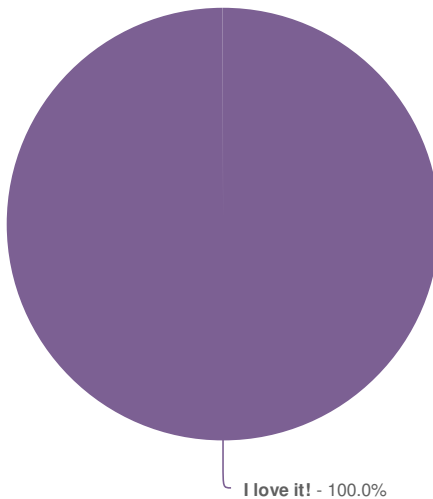
Goat Hill Draft Improvement Plan Survey Results, July 2015

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Conserve remnant trees



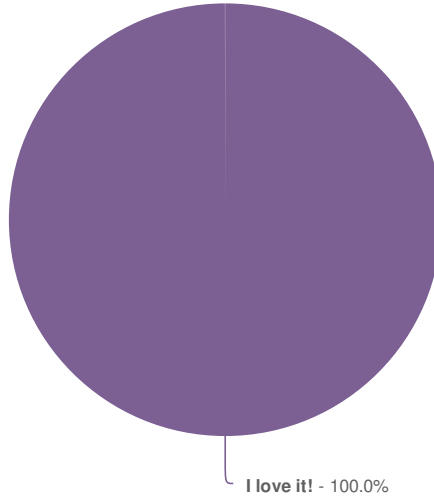
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	100.0%	1
Total		1

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Construct nature trail



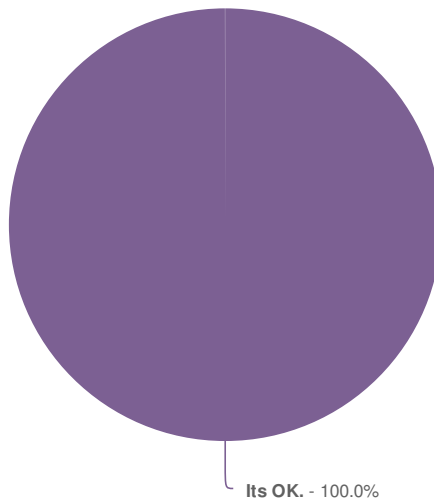
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	100.0%	1
Total		1

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Continue native plant restoration



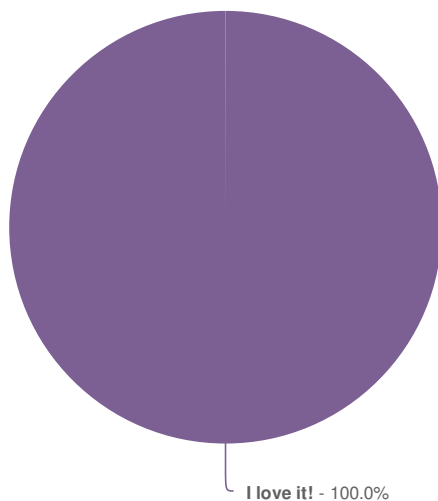
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	100.0%	1
Total		1

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Eradicate invasive species and restore natural area



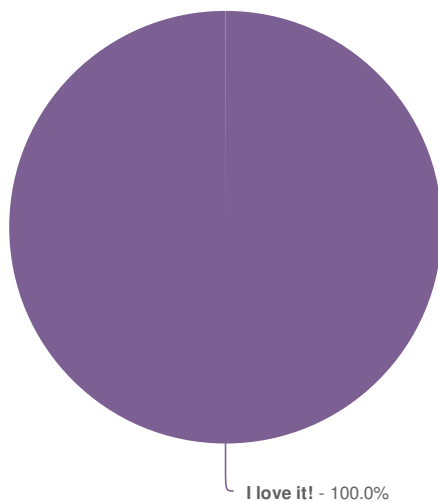
Value	Percent	Count
Its OK.	100.0%	1
Total		1

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Formalize park entrance as a nature trail entrance at Hickory St.



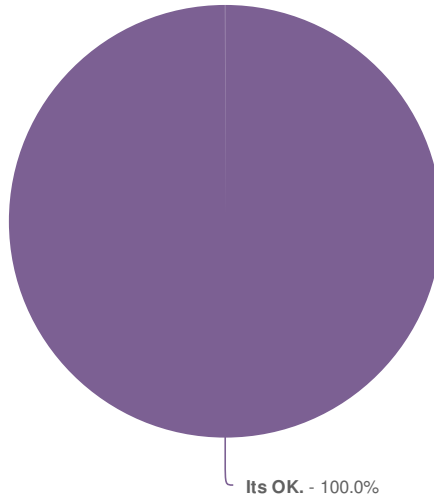
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	100.0%	1
Total		1

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Improve access from Kennedy Street



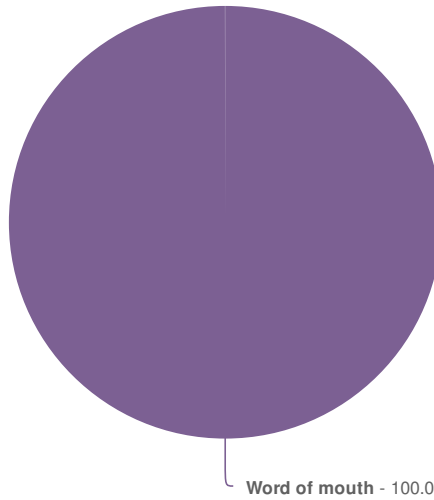
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	100.0%	1
Total		1

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Seek partner agreements with neighbors on park plantings



Value	Percent	Count
Its OK.	100.0%	1
Total		1

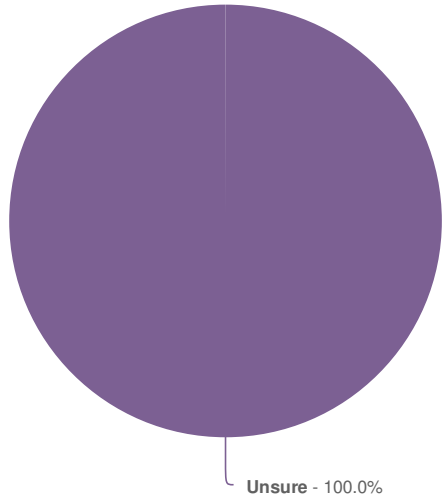
How did you learn about the Neighborhood Park Plan survey?



Value	Percent	Count
Word of mouth	100.0%	1
Total		1

Responses "Other"	Count
Left Blank	1

Will you be attending the workshop on May 27 from 7pm-8:30pm at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center to discuss the draft plan?

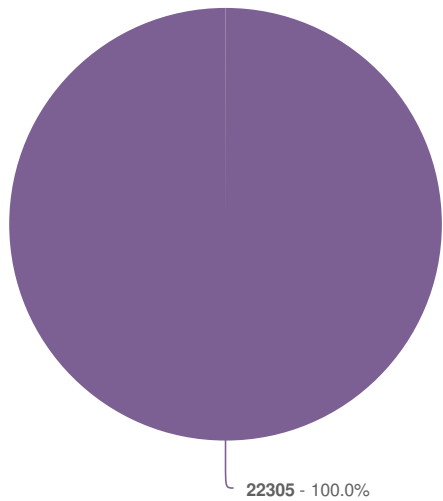


Value	Percent	Count
Unsure	100.0%	1
Total		1

How many members of your household are in the following age groups?

	# in household	Responses
Under 5	1 100.0%	1
30-49	1 100.0%	1

What is your zip code?



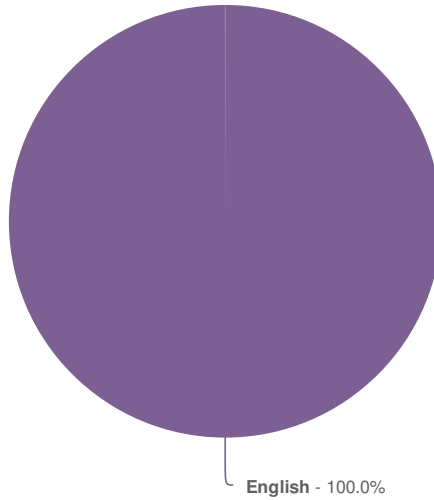
Value	Percent	Count	Statistics
Total		1	Sum 22,305.0

Value	Percent	Count	Statistics
22305	100.0%	1	Average 22,305.0
Total		1	Max 22,305.0

Responses "I live outside of Alexandria"

	Count
Left Blank	1

What is the primary language spoken in your home?



Value	Percent	Count
English	100.0%	1
Total		1

Responses "other"

	Count
Left Blank	1