

Mulligan Park

History and Character

Being in close proximity to Holmes Run, Mulligan Park would have been rich in game during prehistoric times. Native Americans likely would have used the area for hunting. As other hunting camps dating as far back as 10,000 years ago have been found in western Alexandria, there is the possibility that archaeological evidence of hunting activities may be found within the park. This area of Alexandria was first settled by Europeans in the early 18th century and remained primarily agricultural until the early 20th century.

Private landowners sold both the Mulligan Park site and the adjacent eastern site to the City in 1979. Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority (ARHA) developed the site to the east. The City constructed the playground in Mulligan Park primarily for use by children residing at the ARHA site.

Today, the park is surrounded on all four sides by private property, with the exception of a small right-of-way at the southeast corner that is forested. Little remains of the natural forest in the park site, with much of the wooded area is completely overrun with a myriad of non-native invasive species. A narrow grove of old and large White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Pignut Hickory (*Carya glabra*), Southern Red Oak (*Quercus falcata*), and Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*) grow along the western edge of the park. The forested area does not have any trails and is heavily inundated with invasive species.

At the northwest corner of the park near the Bolling Brook Condominium swimming pool is a large, City co-champion Sweet Crabapple (*Malus coronaria*). The occurrence at the park is the sole surviving remnant of that colony and is one of two stations in the City for this plant.

The lack of adjacent public land presents a problem as all park entrances, including ADA access and park maintenance, requires crossing through private property. Given its limited access, the playground and picnic area are almost exclusively used by residents at the adjacent Bolling Brook Condominium and the ARHA site.

This particular area of the west end of Alexandria has few public parks within walking distance of residents, yet it has a very dense population. The 2011 and 2013 Citywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessments show a high need for walking trails and nature areas in this part of the City. Yet, while this site has potential for a nature trail, its lack of public access is a challenge to meeting these needs.

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. While only 1 person completed the survey for Mulligan Park, a couple of neighbors wrote suggestions on the graffiti board and also e-mailed staff directly with comments and attended the November 2014 workshop.

Comments from Community Workshop (11/1/2014)

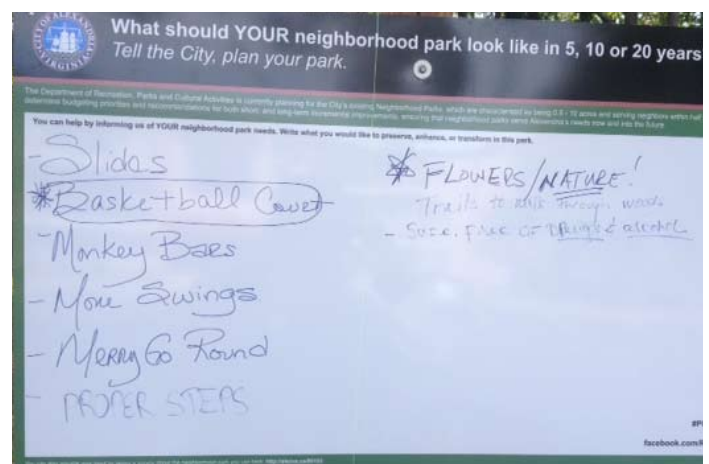
- Slides for big/small children
- Monkey bars
- Merry-go-round
- More benches
- Trails
- Dog park
- Basketball court
- Increase lightning
- Coordinate with home properties
- Proposal for 28th street cul-de-sac access
- ARHA step improvement
- ADA Parking: 2 or 3 party negotiation

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. No changes were made to the Mulligan 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. The sign was on site from September to November 2014 (image from October 27).



Existing Conditions



Improvement Recommendations

- 1 Repair the stairs and trail from 28th St. in coordination with the Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority (ARHA) - COMPLETED FALL 2015**
The current access to the Park from 28th Street is located on ARHA property. It has fallen into disrepair and is an unsafe condition.
- 2 Clear invasive brush along access path**
The brush along the access path needs to be continually cleared so that it feels more open and safe to walk by. Clearing the invasive species will also help prevent further spread into the wooded area.
- 3 Create nature trail through the wooded area**
Mulligan Park is located in an area of the city that lacks sufficient access to nature and open space. This plan recommends creating a pervious nature trail through the wooded area in order to help meet the recreational need of residents. The trail would ascend a steep slope and be up to 1/4 mile, depending upon the exact route. The trail would create the only publicly owned access to the park.

- 4 Trim trees along fenceline**
In order to maintain sightlines into the park, this plan recommends trimming the trees along the southern boundary of the park.
- 5 Continue to pursue ways to provide access for people with disabilities**
Mulligan Park has unique characteristics of terrain that make it structurally impracticable to incorporate an accessible route for some persons with mobility disabilities to access the park's facilities. In addition, the park is surrounded by private property and the City cannot mandate accessibility on land it does not own or lease. The City sought an agreement with an adjacent property to ensure an accessible route by dedicating two parking spaces in front of the park for people with disabilities to use. Unfortunately, a suitable agreement was not reached. The city will continue to seek accessible routes to the site.



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.

Mulligan Park					
#	Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Associated Recommendations	Dept Lead
1	Repair the stairs and trail from 28th St. in coordination with the Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority			Complete as of September 2015	ARHA
2	Clear invasive brush along access path	Medium	Underway		RPCA
3	Create nature trail through the wooded area	Low	\$250,000 - \$300,000		RPCA
4	Trim trees along fenceline	Medium	10,000 - 20,000	includes eradicating Porcelainberry flume and bamboo	RPCA
5	Continue to pursue ways to provide access for people with disabilities	Medium	N/A at this time		RPCA



RPCA and ARHA Staff worked together in September 2015 to repair the stairs from the ARHA site to Mulligan Park.

2015 Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan: Appendix



Neighborhood Parks Plan

James Mulligan 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.

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, 1 of which was specific to James Mulligan Park.

How do you get to this Park?

Value	Count	Percent
Walk	1	100.0%
Bike (personal)	0	0.0%
Bike (Capital Bikeshare)	0	0.0%
Drive	0	0.0%
Public Transit	0	0.0%
Carpool	0	0.0%

How far do you typically travel to visit this park?

Value	Count	Percent
Less than 1/2 mile	0	0.0%
Between 1/2 mile to 1 mile	1	100.0%
Between 1-2 miles	0	0.0%
Over 2 miles	0	0.0%

How often do you visit this park?

Value	Count	Percent
Daily	0	0%
Weekly	0	0%
Monthly	1	100%
Yearly	0	0%

What would you like done with the natural area?

Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it as is	0	0%
Enhance it	1	100%
Transform it	0	0%

Explain

Can we build a field for kids to play sports?

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

Response

Large area for recreational and social sports

Comments from Community Workshop (11/1/2014)

- Slides for big/small children
- Monkey bars
- Merry-go-round
- More benches
- Trails
- Dog park
- Basketball court
- Increase lightning
- Coordinate with home properties
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- ARHA step improvement
- ADA Parking: 2 or 3 party negotiation

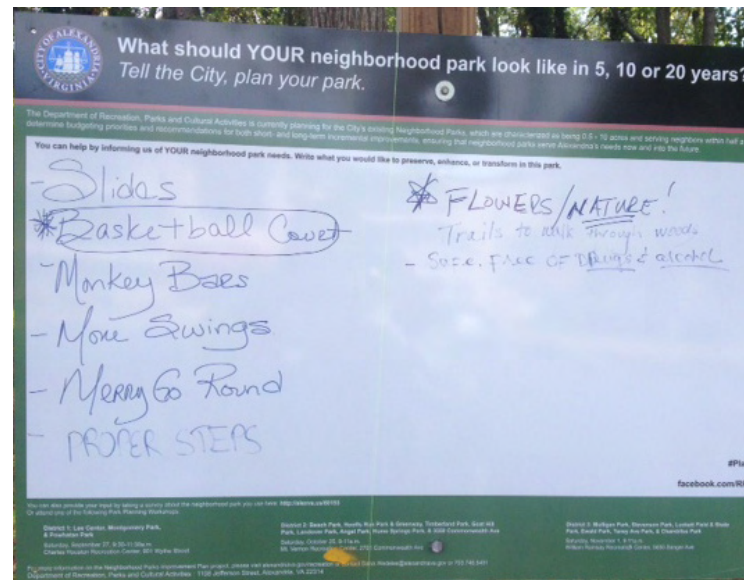
In 10 years I would like this Park to...

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

1. Provide organized recreational opportunities
2. Be a safe place for children to explore
3. Be more accessible

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. The sign was on site from September to November 2014 (image from October 27).





James Mulligan Park

Improvement Recommendations

Draft (Spring 2015)

- 1 Repair the stairs and trail from 28th St. in coordination with the Alexandria Rehabilitation Housing Authority (ARHA)**
The current access to the Park from 28th Street is located on ARHA property. It has fallen into disrepair and is an unsafe condition. The city intends to work with ARHA in Spring 2015 to repair the stairs and path connection.
- 2 Clear invasive brush along access path**
In conjunction with the Spring 2015 stair project, the City plans to work with volunteers to clear the brush along the pathway so that it feels more open and safer to walk by.
- 3 Create nature trail through the wooded area**
Mulligan Park is located in an area of the city that lacks sufficient access to nature and open space. This plan recommends creating a nature trail through the wooded area in order to help meet the recreational need of residents. The trail would ascend a steep slope and be up to 1/4 mile, depending upon the exact route. The trail would create the only publicly owned access to the park.

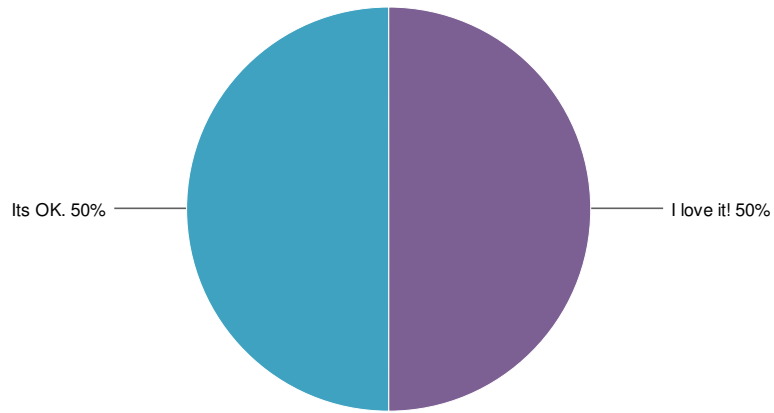
- 4 Trim trees along fenceline**
In order to maintain sightlines into the park, this plan recommends trimming the trees along the southern boundary of the park.
- 5 Work with neighboring property to provide public access**
Mulligan Park is currently inaccessible for people with disabilities. It also lacks public access for maintenance vehicles. Because it is essentially surrounded by private property there is no practical way in which to access the site for maintenance purposes without crossing private property. The city will seek an agreement with the adjacent properties to (1) allow maintenance vehicles to park on private property and (2) dedicate two parking spaces in front of the park for people with disabilities to use.





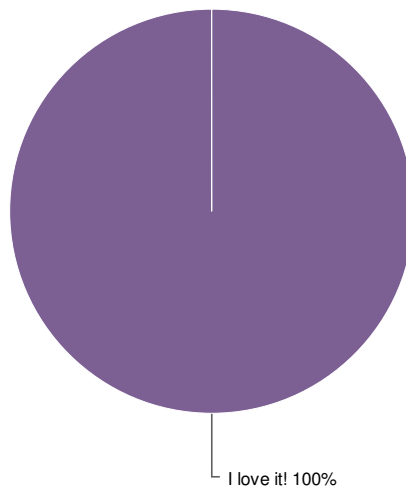
Mulligan Park Draft Improvement Survey Results, July 2015

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Clear invasive brush along access path



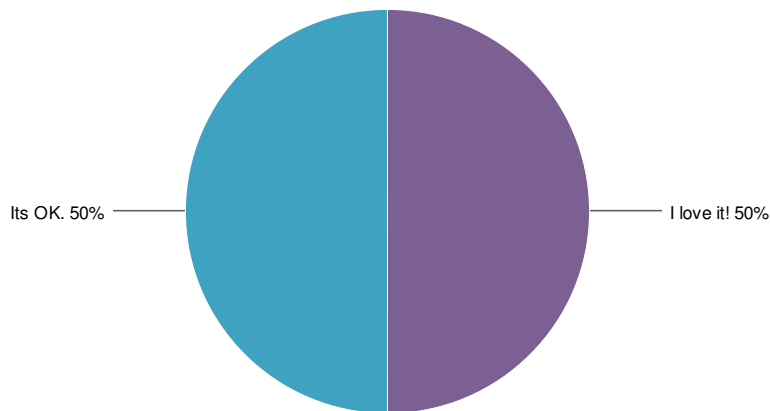
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	50.0%	1
Its OK.	50.0%	1
Total		2

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Create nature trail through the wooded area



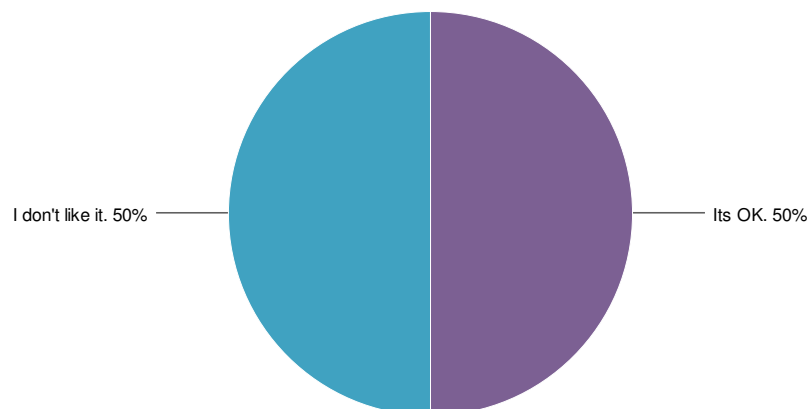
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	100.0%	2
Total		2



What do you think of the following recommendations?-Repair the stairs and trail from 28th St. in coordination with the Alexandria Rehabilitation Housing Authority (ARHA)



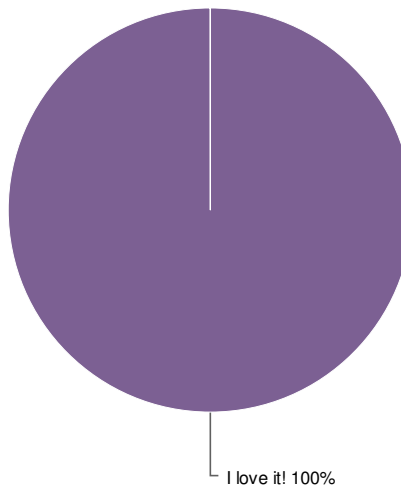
Value	Percent	Count
I love it!	50.0%	1
Its OK.	50.0%	1
Total		2


What do you think of the following recommendations?-Trim trees along fenceline



Value	Percent		Count
Its OK.	50.0%		1
I don't like it.	50.0%		1
Total			2

What do you think of the following recommendations?-Work with neighboring property to provide public access



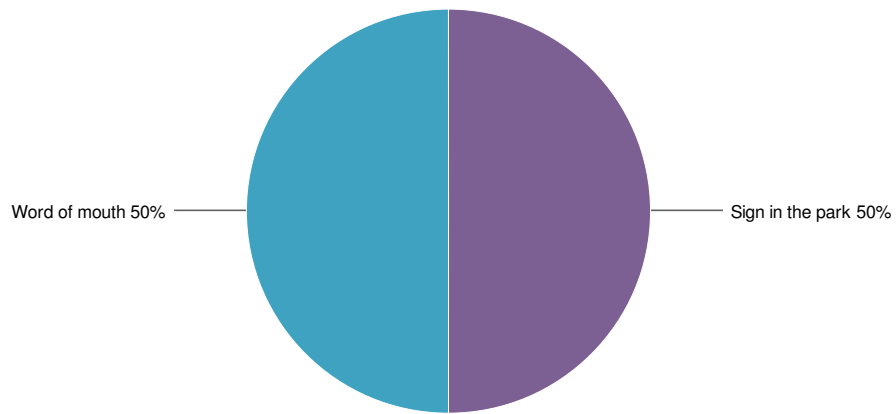
Value	Percent		Count
I love it!	100.0%		2
Total			2

Do you feel all of the comments were heard and addressed in the draft Mulligan Park plan? If not, what is missing and how can we make the plan better?

Count Response

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | I really love the nature trail and public access for people with disabilities. Please don't pave the nature trail. Just keep it dirt/natural and reduce the ivy along the path. The park tables and benches could use new paint too. They are in bad weathered shape. |
| 1 | Hello, i saw the sign that was put with the new design lay outs. It doesn't mention repairing and adding Lights. Can they add a small gated area for a small dog park? Dog bags? The main reason for my email, the wooded area has a lot of ticks and i avoid walking my dog near there. Last night i took him by the kids area and this morning i woke up with a tick on my leg! My dog did not have any, since he has the frontline to avoid ticks. There's lots of kids in that area that play and i am worried that they will get bitten by ticks and not tell their parents. And ticks carry lyme disease. I have lived in Bolling Brook since 2009 and i have never been bitten by a tick. Can the county spray anti tick ? Any info would be truly appreciated , thanks! |

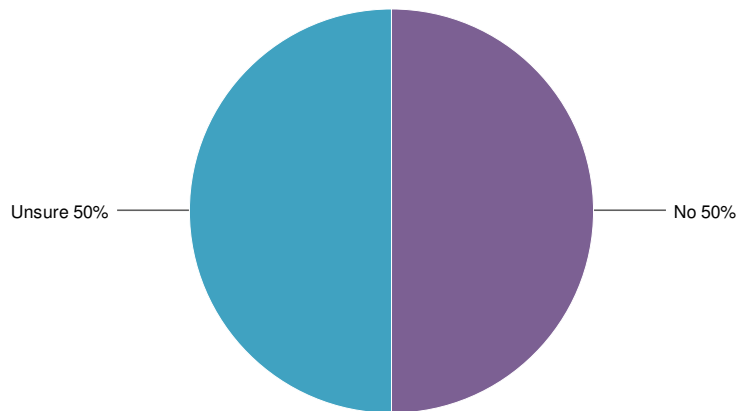
How did you learn about the Neighborhood Park Plan survey?



Value	Percent		Count
Sign in the park	50.0%		1
Word of mouth	50.0%		1
Total			2

Responses "Other"	Count
Left Blank	3

Will you be attending the workshop on June 4 from 7pm-8:30pm at Patrick Henry Recreation Center to discuss the draft park plans?



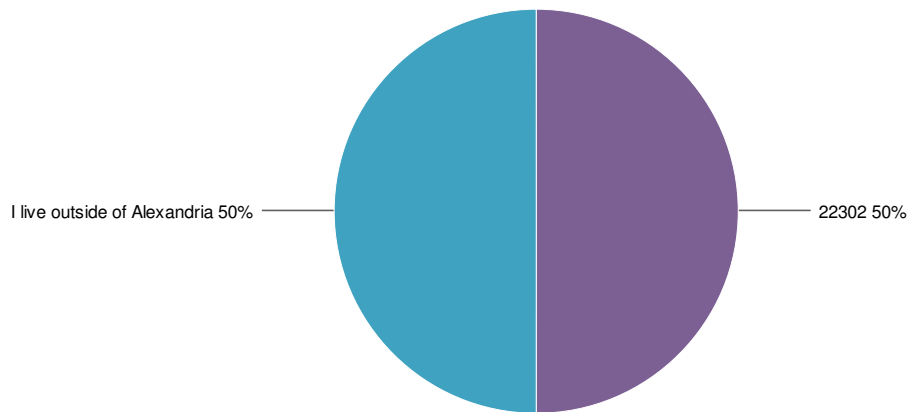
Value	Percent		Count
No	50.0%		1
Total			2

Value	Percent	Count
Unsure	50.0%	1
Total		2

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

	# in household	Responses
13-18	1 100.0%	1
30-49	2 100.0%	2

What is your zip code?

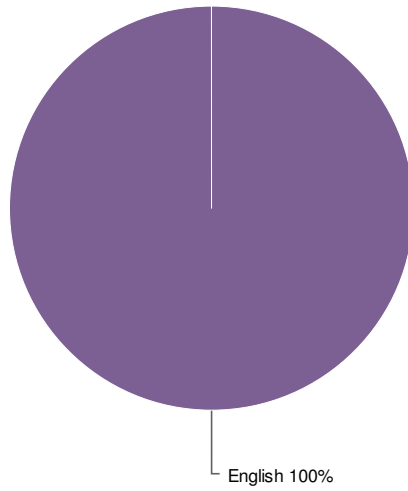


Value	Percent	Count	Statistics
22302	50.0%	1	Sum 22,302.0
I live outside of Alexandria	50.0%	1	Average 22,302.0
Total		2	Max 22,302.0

Responses "I live outside of Alexandria"

	Count
Left Blank	3

What is the primary language spoken in your home?



Value	Percent	Count
English	100.0%	2
Total		2

Responses "other"	Count
Left Blank	3