

**Future John C. and Margaret K. White Horticultural Park
Park Master Plan Process
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers**

Q. What is the property size?

A: 13.6 acres

Q. Where is the park located?

A. The property address is 3301 Hawthorne Lane, Falls Church. It is surrounded by several residential neighborhoods that border Annandale Road, Kerns Road, Holloman Road and Sleepy Hollow Road.

Q: Has the property been conveyed to the county?

A. Yes, in 1999 Mrs. White sold the property to the Park Authority. She retain a life estate. This means she may reside at the property until her death, at which time the Park Authority will take possession of the property.

Q: What is Mrs. White's role?

A. Mrs. White currently resides at the property. Mrs. White is not participating in any decisions involving the park. She is simply interested in seeing the plans in her lifetime.

Q: How did the decision get made to make it a horticultural park?

A. The conditions of the deed conveying the land to the Park Authority restrict its use to a horticultural park until 2075.

Q: What is the park master planning process?

A. The park master planning process considers site conditions, community input and the park purpose to plan the future desired user experiences, resource protection areas, specific use areas, vehicular and pedestrian entrances and circulation within the park. The master plan is a conceptual document. A detailed development plan will be completed when the property is developed.

To date, the White Horticultural Park master planning process has included two public meetings. A public information meeting was held in December 2004 to provide basic information about the property and identify community concerns. A planning workshop was also held in March, 2005 to present site conditions and get community input on appropriate park uses and entrance preferences. The presentations for both meeting can be found on the White Horticultural Park website:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/whiteparkmeeting.htm>

The next planning workshop will be held on July 21, 2005 at JEB Stuart High School.

See the notice at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/whiteworkshop.htm>

Q: What is the purpose of the July 21 workshop?

A: At this meeting, three alternative use concepts will be presented for public discussion and input. The concepts include one with minimal change to the property, one with uses

that will provide potential community partnerships to support the park and complement the Park Authority's main horticultural park, Green Spring Gardens and Hidden Oaks Nature Center and one that proposes a stand alone horticultural park. Citizens will be asked what they like and dislike about each concept and for additional use suggestions.

In addition, the pros and cons of the five potential entrances will be presented and public input will be solicited about the entrance location.

Q: Where will the park entrance be located?

A: There are five potential entrance points to this property all from residential neighborhoods. All potential entrances are being considered and the requirements for each will be presented at the July 21 workshop to allow the public to make their own evaluation and preference.

Q: Who makes the decisions about the park?

A: The Park Authority Board, consisting of 12 citizen volunteers that are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, will approve the master plan after holding a public hearing followed by a 30-day comment period.

Q: How is public input considered?

A: The 12-member Park Authority Board will weigh all components of the planning process prior to making a decision to approve the Master Plan. All elements – public input, site conditions, obligations under the deed, public facility requirements, letters and correspondence, community need and impact – all of these receive equal weight and consideration prior to decision making. There is no question that when communities are divided on the issues the task becomes that much more of a challenge. However, it is the obligation of the Board to consider all factors and make a decision which serves the community well.

Q: Where will parking be located?

A: The parking location has yet to be determined. The park uses, intensity and entrance location will all factor into where the parking will be located.

Q: What will be the size of the parking lot?

A: This will depend on the planned uses. However, we anticipate that at least 30 spaces will be needed.

Q: What are the hours of operation for the park?

A: This is an operational issue, but generally all parks are open daily and close at dusk.

Q: How are you going to deal with the traffic?

A: The Park Authority is sensitive to the potential traffic issues in our neighborhoods. Park uses and management of operations will determine the amount of traffic generated by the future park.

Q: What are the plans for park security?

A. The Park Authority relies on Fairfax County Police and the community to help identify security concerns. In addition, we have volunteer programs such as trail monitors and Parkwatch. These programs help keep eyes on parkland and deter violations. If you see suspicious activity on the property, call the police.

Q: Is there going to be a buffer to surrounding residents?

A. Most park plans incorporate a 50-foot buffer around the property perimeter. The White property has a wooded perimeter that will contribute to the buffering between adjacent properties.

Q: Will the park be fenced?

A. A variety of fence types currently exist around the perimeter of the property. Parks are not generally fenced. An entrance gate may be installed to prevent vehicles from entering the park when it is closed.

Q: Will the park be staffed?

A. The Park Authority has yet to determine if staff will be present or what the size of the staff will be.

Q. Will the residence be rented?

A. The residence is suitable for a residential rental, but that has not been determined yet.

Q: Are you planning picnic areas? Will it attract animals?

A. The Park Authority has yet to determine if the park will include picnic areas. If so, regular maintenance and operations staff will address any wildlife conflict issues.

Q: What about the pond and safety issues?

A. The pond is small and is not always wet. Often naturally occurring waterways are left with little more than basic signage. The pond is a source of water to birds and wildlife that traverse the property.

Q: What is the time frame for the park to open?

A. The Park Authority will not take possession until after the life estate expires. At that point, the Park Authority will need to secure funding for design, construction, operations, and maintenance. We cannot predict when this will occur.

Q: Where is the money coming from to pay for the Master Plan?

A. The Park Authority received funding from the voter approved 1998 park bond referendum for the master plan. This funding will pay for a consultant to prepare a horticultural landscape management plan and other miscellaneous costs of the master planning process, such as title searches and surveying. This is a routine source of funding for the numerous master plans prepared each year.

Q. Does the Park Authority currently maintain the property?

A. Routine maintenance is Mrs. White's responsibility. More substantial work is conducted by the Park Authority in coordination with Mrs. White. For instance, tree

work requested by Mrs. White was recently completed and a small house on the property that was demolished during Hurricane Isabel was removed by the Park Authority.

Q: Is there any funding for projects at this site beyond the Park Master Plan?

A. Maintenance operations are funded as needed through the Park Operations Division budget. Capital funding for site design, development and construction has not been allocated to this park. Capital funding is generally allocated through voter approved park bonds. The next park bond referendum is not scheduled until 2008.

Q: What role do the “Friends of White Horticultural Park” play in the planning process?

A. A volunteer support group, called the Friends of White Horticultural Park, is being formed to support the future park. Many of our parks have “Friends” groups that support park operations in a number of ways. Horticultural Parks are very expensive to operate and require intensive specialized labor. The success of horticultural parks is highly dependent on adequate funding, volunteers, partnerships and support groups.

Q: Where can we submit comments?

A. The Park Authority welcomes public input. Comments can be mailed to:

Sandy Stallman
Long Range Planner, Planning & Development Division
Fairfax County Park Authority
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 421
Fairfax, VA 22035

or comments can be emailed to: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov

Questions for you, the citizen:

So far, we have heard many comments on where the entrance should and shouldn't be. We appreciate this input, but also need your ideas about the park uses and what you think the park should offer its visitors.

We would like to have your input, especially at the 7/21 workshop. At the time of the workshop, we will have three concepts ready for discussion. Think about the following questions:

- How do you envision a typical visitor experience? How would you, your family and neighbors like to enjoy this park?
- How should the residence be used? Residential rental, visitor's center, program/community space, or combination?
- Where should a site equipment storage building and composting area be located?
- What type of horticultural and nature programs should be offered? Children? Teens? Adult? School supported?

- What partnerships with neighbors, friends groups, garden clubs, schools, corporations, community and volunteer groups are appropriate?
- What visitor amenities should be provided? (i.e. restrooms, water fountains, benches)
- What other ideas for park uses or amenities can you share?