

Planning District: Mount Vernon

ID# 22 Theme: Not specified Park: GW RECenter Appropriate for
Topic: Publicity Planning District: Mount Vernon GPGC Action?

Comment: As one of the first users of the George Washington Community Recreation Center I have always been interested in publicizing Fairfax County's Best kept Secret, believed to have the best swimming pool of all Recreation Centers. Several times I have requested you to increase the public's knowledge of the Center. More users would justify keeping the center open longer. I am always unhappy to see it closed so much-what a waste of money !

Response: Refer to PSD, operational issue

Action: No further action required.

ID# 27 Theme: Service Delivery Park: Mt Vernon District Appropriate for
Topic: Facilities, more athletic Planning District: Mount Vernon GPGC Action?

Comment: I would like to see more facilities and amenities in the FCPA parks, especially in those local and district parks that are not located in regulatory protection areas. I feel that there are plenty of areas set aside for natural and cultural resource conservation in Fairfax County already. The vast majority of comments submitted by Fairfax residents over the past few years on the Great Parks initiative were seeking more facility, trail and amenity development in the parks. Only a small proportion of respondents were seeking even greater natural and cultural resource conservation efforts than what we have now. Natural and cultural resource conservation should not be FCPA's primary focus and I am concerned that environmentalists in this county have hijacked FCPA's mission. Of course park development is going to conflict with natural preservation. That is why some particularly sensitive habitat and wetland areas have been set aside for protection. But does FCPA really want to "protect" every square inch of land and preserve it for nature? Or are the parks for the people? Shouldn't we be as concerned about the health and well being of our humans as we are about the health and well being of trees and turtles? The primary purpose of a park is to provide human beings with a place to enjoy nature and engage in physical activity. That is what a park is. A park is NOT a nature preserve. If a parcel of land is primarily intended to be a nature preserve, than call it a preserve and don't try to dupe us into thinking that it's a park. For too many years, FCPA parks have languished with large tracts of undeveloped open land that citizens do not use because there are not enough amenities/improvements on them. The Mt. Vernon District Park is a good example, with its many acres of open lawn that is basically useless to citizens. This grassland is costly to maintain, and does not even provide a natural habitat for any plants or animals. Yes there is land in the park that is developed - -but only a tiny fraction. For the most part, the land in this park is not in a natural state, does not preserve nature yet also delivers nothing to our citizens . I would like to see more complex playgrounds, skate parks, climbing walls, outdoor roller and ice rinks, small ponds, etc. Other communities across the U.S. have much richer, more exciting and usable parks than Fairfax County. We have so much parkland here but it's as

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

if FCPA is afraid to put any improvements on it for fear of disturbing the environment. Yet the whole point of a park is that it a parcel of land that has been developed (to some extent) for human activity. FCPA has many park areas that are designated regulatory conservation areas that cannot be developed. Most citizens are not clamoring to increase these lands -- it's just the opposite. If there is park land that is NOT a designated regulatory conservation area, especially the urban local parks -- why not develop it? People will not support using their taxpayers dollar for the continuous acquisition of parkland unless they begin to see more returns and see that the land is being turned into something they can actually enjoy.

Response: The Park Authority seeks a balance in achieving the various elements of its mission, including providing quality facilities and services as well as the protection and enhancement of the County's natural and cultural resources. Through long range planning and site specific master planning efforts, the Park Authority determines appropriate land uses and facility construction in conjunction with community input. Several unplanned parks are noted in the Great Park, Great Communities plan with recommendations to implement the master planning process to identify appropriate park usage.

Once planned, actual facility construction must be funded through voter-approved bonds or other capital funding sources. Total funding must be allocated between a large number of projects which are approved and awaiting funding.

With regard specifically to Mount Vernon District Park, various elements are planned for the site but yet to be constructed. Portions of the site are intended to remain preserved as natural areas; however, additional elements may be constructed as funding becomes available. Current trail project underway (confirm details with Liz Cronauer). Additionally, Mount Vernon District Park is recommended to receive a review of its 1972 master plan to re-evaluate appropriate park uses in light of current policy and demographics.

Action: No change to GPGC required.

ID# 33 *Theme:* Connectivity

Park: Smitty, MV Manor, Mt Zephyr

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Limit access

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: There is discussion of developing trails that run adjacent to the Smitty's property on Richmond Hwy. and opening access to the Mount Vernon Manor park and Mount Zephyr park to pedestrians coming from Richmond Highway. DO NOT OPEN public access trails, paths, roads to pedestrian or traffic from Richmond Hwy into the Mount Zephyr neighborhood. Criminal elements fleeing police already use Radford and Washington Avenue to escape and hide in our parks. We don't need to open more escape routes for them...that police in pursuit will not be able to use. There is plenty of parking for people who want to use our parks. If we want to use the new town center proposed for Smitty's...we'll drive or walk around. No pedestrian or vehicle access cut through to the Mount Zephyr community. Consider preserving the undeveloped area behind the ISA as a public park. Do not allow development of this open land.

Response: The trail connections mentioned are not identified in the Comprehensive Plan nor in the Great Parks, Great Communities

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

Plan.

The area behind old Mount Vernon High School is owned by the Board of Supervisors and is leased to both the Park Authority and the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for operation of the Islamic Saudi Academy. The lease expires in December of 2012 with an automatic option to extend the agreement for an additional twenty-five years; however, the Park Authority has requested the Board of Supervisors transfer ownership of this property to the Park Authority. But no action can take place prior to expiration of the standing lease.

The site now primarily functions as open space and it is not currently maintained by FCPA Area 3.

Action: No action required.

ID# 37	<i>Theme:</i> Not specified	<i>Park:</i> GW RECenter	Appropriate for GPGC Action? <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Topic:</i> Publicity	<i>Planning District:</i> Mount Vernon	

Comment: The county needs better publicity about its parks. As a user and volunteer at the under utilized George Washington Recreation Center I would like to have more people know how good it is. I would also like to publicize the great tennis courts near the Riverside Elementary school, also under utilized (most people unaware they are for public access, not the school) I hope to attend the Oct. 14 mtng.

Response: [PSD] Agree that additional publicity for GW RECenter would be beneficial.

An agency-wide marketing and communication plan is under development. The document will address many factors, including how the Park Authority can better educate the public regarding services and facilities -- and how to access them.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 45	<i>Theme:</i> Resource Interpretation	<i>Park:</i> Huntley Meadows	Appropriate for GPGC Action? <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Topic:</i> NR, parks	<i>Planning District:</i> Mount Vernon	

Comment: I have been a volunteer at Huntley meadows Park for 12 years so I have witnessed the joy oof young and old in enjoying to natural life there. I hope that planning parks in the future includes enough nature parks rather than the emphasis being put on recreation such as sports. We have plenty of areas for sports already. Last year some positions of interpreters were close to being eliminated. I hope our parks will keep nature interpreters as they teach people to be stewards of our land and community.

Response: The Park Authority seeks a balance in achieving the various elements of its mission, including providing quality facilities and services as well as the protection and enhancement of the County's natural and cultural resources. Through long range

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

planning and site specific master planning efforts, the Park Authority determines appropriate land uses and facility construction in conjunction with community input.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 52	<i>Theme:</i> Not specified	<i>Park:</i>	Appropriate for <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Topic:</i> Publicity	<i>Planning District:</i> Mount Vernon	GPGC Action? <input type="checkbox"/>

Comment: The George Washington Rec, Center and Huntley Meadows Park are both under utilized because they are not well known. Both need more publicity via information in publications and larger signs on the streets close by. Thanks

Response: Acknowledged. An FCPA Countywide Marketing and Communication Plan is currently under development.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 91	<i>Theme:</i> Not specified	<i>Park:</i>	Appropriate for <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Topic:</i> Implementation, process	<i>Planning District:</i> Mount Vernon	GPGC Action? <input type="checkbox"/>

Comment: As noted at mt vernon district meeting, in the Great Parks plan talks the talk but doesn't walk the walk. Although the meeting was well-run and the presentations were very professional, I left with the impression that no one has really thought seriously about the implications of the soaring language in the plan, or attempted to address real issues..

Below are my specific comments.

:

Public input: the fact that your meetings are not well advertised in advance leaves you with an audience with single-track minds. (sorry, but turtle tunnels are not a pressing need.) Unfortunately the Mt. Vernon District meeting was dominated by the nature-at-all-cost proponents or their designates who had already had a chance to comment when the Park Authority briefed the environmental committee of the MtVCCA a short time before the public meeting. It appears that these people were the only ones notified of the meeting ; I saw nothing in the local paper about this meeting beforehand , and heard about it myself only because I was at a meeting with supervisor hyland and park auth staff the previous week.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 93	<i>Theme:</i> Connectivity	<i>Park:</i>	Appropriate for <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Topic:</i> Trails, water	<i>Planning District:</i> Mount Vernon	GPGC Action? <input type="checkbox"/>

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

Comment: 1. The emphasis on connectivity, and the inclusion in the plan of a Little Hunting Creek trail from Route 1 to White Oak Park, is welcome and exciting. 2. The proposal for a water trail is novel and welcome.

Response: Acknowledged.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 131 *Theme:* Connectivity

Park:

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Trails, water

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: Given our proximity to the Potomac, water trails have been sorely missing. It's good to see that they are included for the Mt. Vernon area.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 139 *Theme:* Facility Reinvestment

Park: Bucknell Manor Park

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Bucknell Park

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: • Bucknell Manor Park: Appears to need trees, landscaping, and maintenance. Consider a contract for planting trees and maintaining them for at least two years so eventually there is shade in the seating area that is currently baked by the sun.

Response: The Master Plan for Bucknell Manor Park does reflect considerable areas of trees, which don't appear to be present in the park. This is an appropriate project for a community partnership and Mastenbrook Grant funding. [POD] Landscaping has been attempted in the past, but there has been trouble keeping new plantings alive.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 141 *Theme:* Service Delivery

Park: Lamond Park

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Lamond

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: • Lamond Park: Could be an income-generator if the house were available for small weddings, conferences, etc. A caterer who looked at it said places of its size and layout were sorely needed. The County has owned it since 2000. It is great for walking and the community appreciates the acres of trees. However, it's not being used to its potential. What is in the plan for Lamond?

Response: The Master Plan for Lamond Park speaks to the value of using the existing home as a rental venue. Major renovation has been done to stabilize the historic home. Use of the property as a rental venue, however, would require improvements to site access and parking which are currently cost prohibitive. The Park Authority continues to explore alternate funding

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

opportunities that could finance the needed site improvements.

Action: Add strategy: "Seek funding opportunities and/or public-private partnerships to improve access and use of the historic house."

ID# 142	<i>Theme:</i> Service Delivery	<i>Park:</i> Westgrove	Appropriate for
	<i>Topic:</i> Dog parks	<i>Planning District:</i> Mount Vernon	GPGC Action? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comment: Dog parks: The dogs I have encountered off-leach in Lamond Park and Dyke Marsh frequently bound off the trails into wooded, bramble- and poison ivy-filled areas. It is hard to imagine their owners following them to clean up after them if Westgrove Pumping Station becomes a dog park. Given the sensitivity of the Westgrove area, its proximity and connectivity to Dyke Marsh and the Potomac, and its drainage onto the property of a nearby apartment complex, I urge the Park Authority to continue to say "no" to a dog park at Westgrove.

I understand that the developer of the Heights at Groveton has proffered a dog park at Lenclair Park and I urge exploration of this as an environmentally sound alternative to a dog park at Westgrove

Response: The Park Authority has a standard process for how off-leash dog parks might be incorporated within park property. This process, established in coordination with dog owner's, seeks to provide a fair, consistent approach within the Park Authority's current Master Plan process for establishing appropriate usage of parkland.

An off-leash dog area is proffered for Lenclair Park with construction anticipated in 2011. An off-leash dog area is also included in the North Hill Park Master Plan. Additionally, master plan action is proposed for Westgrove Park to evaluate the most appropriate use of that property.

Action: Update list of parks that require Master Plan action to include Westgrove.
Add strategy to Service Delivery, "Implement master planned facilities for North Hill Park, including the planned dog park"

ID# 143	<i>Theme:</i> Natural Resource Stewardship	<i>Park:</i> North Hill Park	Appropriate for
	<i>Topic:</i> North Hill Park	<i>Planning District:</i> Mount Vernon	GPGC Action? <input type="checkbox"/>

Comment: - North Hill Park: The community feels strongly that North Hill should be a community serving, natural area, retained for walking and other passive activities. This type of park requires a minimum of development. Invasives management in North Hill is a very serious problem and a plan and volunteer program are sorely needed to manage them. The lack of a survey by a certified arborist is a concern that I hope the FCPA will address.

Response: Acknowledged. North Hill Park MP provides for such a park. The tree survey was conducted by a licensed professional landscape firm. Fairfax County Urban Forester Jessie Strothers has confirmed that no further certification is needed for the

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

survey. Tree preservation is a key part of woodland management objectives for North Hill Park. Mitigation of the extensive spread of invasives species within North Hill will first be addressed through contracted services then followed by volunteer maintenance. At this point in time, however, North Hill park remains in the ownership of the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 144 *Theme:* Natural Resource Stewardship

Park:

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Beacon Hill

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: • Beacon Hill: When redevelopment occurs along the Route 1 corridor, locate a park in the Beacon Hill area to reduce damage to the Paul Springs Branch that currently rises in parking lots. The area is in strong need of community parks to provide for onsite water retention and green infrastructure.

Response: Stormwater detention and the correction of stormwater issues are not primary functions of parks. Limited opportunities exist for land acquisition for parks in the Richmond Highway corridor except through redevelopment. Within the Comprehensive plan, the Beacon/Groveton Community Business Center has language that addresses the stormwater management issue. This text was updated specifically to address the stormwater issue through APR 09-IV-14MV. Although not expressly supported by the Comprehensive Plan text, the Great Parks, Great Communities plan does speak to promoting urban parks in the Route 1 Corridor and Community Business Centers, especially as redevelopment occurs.

Action: No change recommended to the GPGC plan

ID# 158 *Theme:* Natural Resource Stewardship

Park: Westgrove

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: NR, Dyke Marsh

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: Westgrove Park is on the western boundary of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Dyke Marsh is a freshwater, tidal, cattail, climax, riverine marsh, one of the few left on the Potomac River and in the National Park Service system. It is a local and national treasure.

What happens in Westgrove Park impacts the preserve.

The Friends of Dyke Marsh would have grave concerns about any further development of that property. The preserve is already suffering from pollution, trash, E. coli bacteria, invasive plants and animals, poaching, commercial fishing, waterfowl hunting, off-leash dogs (barred by NPS rules), bank erosion and other threats. Key to protecting the preserve is protecting its boundaries.

We are aware that some are proposing that Westgrove Park be an off-leash dog park. We have posed the following questions to county officials and the proponents:

1. Another Nearby: With the developer at Groveton Heights proffering a new dog park at Lenclair Park, why can't that meet the need? Why not use the dog park at Grist Mill Park?
2. Need: What is the need for an off-leash dog park? How is that need determined and quantified and what are the county's metrics for determining need?
3. Other Areas: What other areas have the proponents and the county considered, for example, Hollin Hall Senior Center, Walt Whitman Intermediate School, Belle View Elementary School, Mount Vernon Government Center, South County Government Center, Collingwood Park and Inova Hospital, areas that are already highly disturbed and developed?
4. Inventory: When will the county conduct an inventory of the natural resources at Westgrove Park? Without an inventory, will the county proceed to development, development that could destroy plants and animals, some of which could be rare, threatened or endangered?
5. RPA: Part of Westgrove Park is in a resource protection area. Park Authority documents say that "Dog parks cannot be placed within Resource Protection Areas . . ." Doesn't this violate that? Why isn't an off-leash dog park inconsistent with the purposes of RPAs?
6. Connectivity: How will developing a dog park further the county's goal of connecting parks and natural areas? Given the location of Westgrove between Mount Vernon Park and the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, wouldn't keeping it natural, without further development, without dogs, provide connectivity?
7. Degraded Streams: The Belle Haven Watershed Plan says that the streams in that watershed are of the "poorest quality" in the county. How will the development of a dog park, with more impervious surfaces, four inches of stone dust, an asphalt trail, an expanded entrance and turn lane and the expanded infrastructure and the stormwater runoff and pollution they bring, improve the quality of the streams?
8. E. coli in Streams: Many area streams have E. coli levels exceeding state water quality standards. One source of E. coli is pet feces. Though this is not a major source, how will dog owners whose dogs run off-leash over the property, into the woods, for example, ensure that all feces will be collected? Does the Park Authority have sufficient staff to enforce requirements to pick up dog feces and bags?

9.Nesting Birds, Plants: There are at least five species of ground nesting birds in northern Virginia. How will off-leash dogs be prevented from disturbing nesting birds and other animals and their young and plants? There have been several studies (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/science/article2388323.ece> and <http://www.newforestexplorersguide.co.uk/sitefolders/wildlife/birds/aadisturbance/disturbancepage.html>) that show even a leashed, well-behaved dog is perceived as a predator to nesting birds and can prevent them from successful nesting. These studies have shown that a dog's presence can cause a 40% drop in bird numbers and a 35% drop in bird species.

10. Natural Resource Park: Given the dearth of natural resource parks, why not keep Westgrove as a natural resource park? Why does it have to be developed?

11.National Park Service: What is the position of the U. S. National Park Service on an off-leash dog park at Westgrove? If they have not been consulted, when will they be?

12.Further Development: What assurances are there that further facilities will not be built there, beyond those the FCPA currently required for dog parks?

13.Traffic Hazard: With more vehicles turning into the property on a curve, how will vehicular and pedestrian safety be assured?

14.Controls: How will the number of dogs at a dog park at any one time managed or controlled?

15.Sponsoring Organization/Memoranda of Understanding: How does the county maintain a stable, long-term sponsoring organization, as people move away or die?

16.Dog Behavior: Different dogs have different instincts. For example, border collies like to herd animals. Others like to dig holes. How can dog owners guarantee that their dogs off-leash would not disturb wildlife?

When we have answers to these questions, we can provide further analysis and recommendations. If FCPA proceeds to develop a master plan, we look forward to participating in its development.

Response: Acknowledged. At the time that Westgrove Park is Master Planned, the proximity of Dyke Marsh and any potential impacts will be more fully considered. The proposed interim dog park at Westgrove Park has not been supported or authorized by the Park Authority Board. The many questions posed in this comment are part of the master plan site analysis process and will be deferred until the Westgrove MP is authorized and assigned by the Park Authority Board.

Action: Mark Westgrove Park for MP action in the Mount Vernon District Chapter. Capture questions in the Westgrove MP folder to address at time master plan is conducted.

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

ID# 188 *Theme:* Facility Reinvestment *Park:* MtVernon RECenter *Appropriate for GPGC Action?*
Topic: RECenter *Planning District:* Mount Vernon

Comment: 5.Maintenance of RECenters, e.g. Mt Vernon RECenter is ready for major upgrades.

Response: Numerous projects have been proposed and completed to upgrade the Mount Vernon RECenter with sustainability and stewardship as goals, in line with the Board of Supervisors Environmental Agenda. Some of the projects completed include upgrading pool lighting and control, painting of the pool area repainted for greater reflectivity, overall upgrading of building lighting, and installation of building sensors. Future projects that have been identified include review and upgrading of ice rink lighting and control, review for improvements to mechanical systems, and evaluation of solar thermal system for the building.

Action: Add to last bulleted strategy under Issue of repair, replacement . . .
"Any proposed renovation, redevelopment or replacement should be evaluated for conformance with the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Agenda." (include link to Environmental Agenda)

ID# 196 *Theme:* Not specified *Park:* *Appropriate for GPGC Action?*
Topic: Needs assessment *Planning District:* Mount Vernon

Comment: 5.Needs metrics used in Plan (e.g., Table 2 of Mt Vernon plan) do not distinguish between differences in regional/area needs. Be certain to look beyond the metrics in locating facilities.

Response: Acknowledged and the reality is that we do look beyond the metrics and consider locational elements such as context, resources and park type. This is done at the site master plan level.

Action: Add brief explanatory text to service level sections with needs analysis tables: "While needs are quantified in Table 2, location of needed facilities is determined through the site specific master planning process that considers site conditions, context, resources and community input."

ID# 200 *Theme:* Community Building *Park:* *Appropriate for GPGC Action?*
Topic: Supervisor Hyland initiative *Planning District:* Mount Vernon

Comment: 9.Relationship of Supervisor Hyland's Visioning Task Force to Great Parks process and plan, e.g., community building aspects of parks, creating a sense of place.

Response: The Park Authority continues to work with the Mount Vernon District Visioning Task Force's Committee on Parks and the Environment to seek alignment between the committee's visioning statement and the Great Parks, Great Communities Plan.

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

Action: No change required to GPGC

ID# 209 *Theme:* Natural Resource Stewardship

Park:

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Stormwater, restoration

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: While you're at it, change development procedures so that clearcutting of trees over a certain (young) age is prohibited. I know the County talks about stormwater management all the time, but I see very little happening in Mount Vernon District. Our streams are in poor quality, by and large. Quander Creek is barely alive. We need to stop the undercutting of banks by storm surges and daylight streams. Can't we get some corporation to slap their logo on thousands of rain barrels that are then distributed free to residents (particularly those living adjacent to streams)? I would shift funding from expensive recreational facilities and re-focus the public on enjoying natural areas. For outdoor exercise activities, we should try to engage youth in restoration activities. They can learn to work as a team, show up for training sessions, get exercise, and feel a sense of accomplishment when their local stream, rain garden, meadow, etc., "wins" (is restored to a healthy state). Overly optimistic, I know, but we need to start getting people to think in these directions. Healthy environments are something we ALL need to contribute to: it's not just a service provided by the County. Thanks for the chance to comment.

Response: The Park Authority does not have the authority to amend overall development procedures, many of which are established by State standards. The Great Parks, Great Communities Plan, however, does speak to working with the Department of Public Works and local Homeowners Associations to implement watershed plans, particularly when parkland is downstream of developing areas. The County's approved watershed plans for the Belle Haven Watershed, which includes Quander Creek, identifies several stream restoration projects for Quander Creek.

Action: No change required to GPGC plan

ID# 216 *Theme:* Community Building

Park:

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Dog parks

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: OLDA's - The plan as presented includes no plans for dog parks, despite the acknowledged need and shortfall. If dog exercise is primary use of parkland, as the plan states, then the county should proactively meet need for the approx 80k dogs in the county--not try to palm it off on owners by putting out lengthy legal agreements, etc., and extorting dog owners by demanding that they pay outrageous sums for amenities that the county could provide at minimal cost. Why not adopt standards like those in Alexandria, which brags dog exercise areas within a mile of every resident, where many OLDAs are unfenced, and where signs make clear that owners are responsible if their dogs harm the public safety. (not make them criminals just for playing with their dogs, as does Fairfax County).

The Plan claims to recognize the importance of OLDAs but then sets absurd standards (1/86k residents makes no sense; most places with such standards have 1/25k residents; Portland Oregon, with half the pop of Fairfax county, already has 34

dog parks): far better to address real needs of the 8000 or so dogs in this district for nearby places to exercise. The Park Authority's insistence that dog owners should finance their construction and be responsible for actions of anyone who uses an OLDA or risk having them shut down borders on extortion. We don't own lions and tigers; why can't the Park Authority look at neighboring Alexandria for some sensible guidelines? (including unfenced OLDAs, which Alexandria has even in heavily-populated areas.

The Park Authority's unwillingness to deal responsibly with citizen's requests on this issue raises questions about the sincerity of the plan's intentions to build a sense of community and meet real needs. (why wasn't a dog play area put in Lamond pk when all citizens focus groups cited that as need? why hasn't there been a plan for Westgrove for more than a decade, and why isn't it even mentioned in this plan? (how about the other local parks shown on the map -- there should have been some target dates and ideas put forth for ppl to react to). And why isn't there anything in this plan about how to meet the needs set for 2010 (and ignored) .

-- it also makes little sense to consider "district parks" for dogs. What is needed is simply more local parks with adequate space for dogs to run (and half an acre, as the Park Authority now seems set on, is inadequate (less than 700 square feet /dog to run is not very much for more than a couple of dogs.). there should certainly be something the size of grist mill (1 acre), within 2 miles of any residents). Dogs need exercise every day; requiring residents to drive 40-50 minutes for a 20-minute romp wastes time and money, pollutes and congests -issues that should really worry the " environmentalists" who oppose OLDAs.

If the Park Authority hates dogs as much as recent history suggests, the County's residents are the losers, because avoiding the issue, as the Park Authority has done successfully for at least 5 years, makes the county look stingy and mean. A relatively small investment for fenced or unfenced areas would do much to meet the Plan's worthy goal of building a sense of community (essential in a commuter county where most people's lives are spent in cars or at work and few even know their neighbors.) OLDAs are especially important in the Mount Vernon District, where the population is among the oldest in the country, where dogs are often a second family, and where there are probably more dogs than school age children. OLDAs are a great place for people to make friends, get some exercise themselves while socializing their dogs (dual use), and perhaps express appreciation for a caring county government. People are so desperate for this amenity that they have become a guerrilla force relentlessly hunted by the cops-- not a pretty picture for a county that prides itself on meeting resident's needs.

Response: Prior to providing any off-leash dog areas in county parks, the Park Authority worked with dog groups from across the county to develop the current model for dog parks. The model relies on a sponsoring partner in the development and operation of off-leash dog areas in county parks. Existing dog parks were established in parks with existing facilities and infrastructure that are required to support the dog park.

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

The provision of an off-leash dog park at any particular park site typically requires that the dog park be identified as an approved use through the park master plan process. The master plan process provides a equitable means of evaluating appropriate, park-specific uses through a public-input process. Such is the case for the dog park planned for North Hill Park. Additionally, dog parks may be established through proffered commitments as with the dog park planned for construction at Lenclair Park in 2011.

Action: Change CB strategy that reads, "Explore the possibility of providing a neighborhood-scale off-leash dog area in the northern portion of the district" to "Support the construction of the planned dog park at Lenclair Park, to be provided by the developer through a proffered commitment"

Add strategy to Service Delivery, "Implement master planned facilities for North Hill Park, including the planned dog park", see also #142

Consider review of dog park service level standard in next Needs Assessment.

ID# 217 *Theme:* Service Delivery

Park: Grist Mill

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Dog parks, mntn bike

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: Plans for Mt Vernon District

The only specific recommendation I found for the Mount Vernon District was consider adding mountain bike training area at Grist Mill, but I see nothing about an expressed need (which would hardly trump the need for dog parks) nor does mountain bike training seem necessary in this lowland area. (and at what cost?) Why was this added and nothing said about OLDAs?

Response: The bicycle track is an element that was removed from the Grist Mill Master Plan when it was updated in 2002. This facility was included erroneously as a district strategy and has been removed.

Action: Remove reference to the mountain bike training area from the GPGC plan

ID# 220 *Theme:* Connectivity

Park:

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: VDOT crosswalk

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: Connectivity. The connectivity and community building ideas are great, but there seems to be little interest in finding solutions to those needs. Again, the plan is silent on an area that has an urgent need for connectivity and dual use. The Belleview School, MW library, Mt. Vernon Park and Westgrove Park could be planned to meet these needs-connectivity could be solved cheaply by adding a crosswalk and some gates so people could use existing parking in that area, but the Park Authority's refusal to even address this issue with some creative thinking is disturbing. (It's hard to believe that VDOT could not be persuaded to paint a few lines for a crosswalk at what is already a very dangerous crossing that school children use every day. I was down there today myself to check it out-there is already what appears to be a solar-powered flashing

light, and I saw a class of children cross the road at great risk to life and limb..).

Connectivity and dual use of parking spaces in that area would make country resources more productive. In a conversation last August, mr dargle indicated that the county was considering doing a gate from belleview school to the westgrove park so kids could take nature walks. there might have to be some clearing down there, but there are lots of downed trees there could be cleared out relatively easily, and a path could be cleared (and perhaps covered with mulch.). No reason why Westgrove could'nt be dual use: signs establishing times for dog walking ; school use, etc. signs and stripes don't cost very much. Creative thinking is needed, and a will to see things through.

As a former city planner, i am fully aware that planning is a process, but process has a way of this district will be better served when the park authority gets down to real work.

Response: FCPA is currently improving the trail along Fort Hunt Road, on the other side of the road from Westgrove Park. Any connections to or from Westgrove Park as well as any facilities within the park will be considered as part of the master planning process.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 229 *Theme:* Natural Resource Stewardship

Park: Mount Vernon RECenter

Appropriate for GPGC Action?

Topic: Sustainability

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: a. FCPA plans to incorporate green building features and low-impact development into any renovation or replacement of the Mount Vernon RECenter. The plan should emphasize the reduction of operating costs due to savings of energy and water as a reason and benefit for this.

Response: Numerous projects have been proposed and completed to upgrade the Mount Vernon RECenter with sustainability and stewardship as goals, in line with the Board of Supervisors Environmental Agenda. Some of the projects completed include upgrading pool lighting and control, painting of the pool area repainted for greater reflectivity, overall upgrading of building lighting, and installation of building sensors. Future projects that have been identified include review and upgrading of ice rink lighting and control, review for improvements to mechanical systems, and evaluation of solar thermal system for the building.

Action: Add to last bulleted strategy under Issue of repair, replacement . . .

"Any proposed renovation, redevelopment or replacement should be evaluated for conformance with the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Agenda." (include link to Environmental Agenda)

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

ID# 235 *Theme:* Natural Resource Stewardship

Park: Fairchild

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Fairchild

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: 9. Comments on particular parks a. Resolve the status of the Fairchild property, and turn it into a park that highlights its natural beauty, its environmental features, and the historical significance of Spring Bank. Plan a restoration of the horribly degraded Quander Brook that bounds it, and develop and invasives management plan.

Response: The "Fairchild" Property is currently owned by the Board of Supervisors; although, there has been discussion suggesting the land should be transferred to the Park Authority. Adjacent private ownership currently does not allow for viable public access to the area. Existing topography also discourages pedestrian access through the property.

Within the approved Belle Haven Watershed Mangement Plan, Project BE9103 identifies a new stormwater management pond to be constructed on the Fairchild Property, including an extended detention dry pond and a sediment forebay. The pond is intended to improve quantity and quality control for Quander Brook and is associated with several stream restoration projects as well. Project design conderations within the Watershed Management Plan note that significant grading and tree removal will be required to accomplish this project. The extent of reshaping the property to accomplish the goals of the Watershed Management Plan may provide opportunities to explore ways to create viable pedestrian connection that do not exist today.

Action: Land Acquisition

Pursue transfer of Parcel 83-3 ((1)) 24 from Board of Supervisors to Park Authority ownership.

Natural Resources

Coordinate efforts with DPWES for planned stormwater management improvements to Parcel 83-3 ((1)) 24.

ID# 236 *Theme:* Service Delivery

Park: Lamond

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Lamond

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: b. Lamond Park could generate income for the county if the house were available for small weddings, conferences, etc. Its trails and trees are great, but it is not used to its potential. What is planned for Lamond Park?

Response: The Master Plan for Lamond Park currently speaks to the value of using the existing home as a rental venue. Major renovation has been done to stabilize the historic home. Use of the property as a rental venue, however, would require improvements to site access and parking which are currently cost prohibitive. The Park Authority continues to explore alternate funding opportunities that could finance the needed site improvements.

Action: Add strategy: "Seek funding opportunities and/or public-private partnerships to improve access and use of the historic house."

PAB Review: Public Comments and Responses, by Planning District

Friday, May 06, 2011

ID# 237 Theme: Facility Reinvestment

Park: Little Hunting Creek

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Canoe launch repair

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: c. Repair and upgrade the canoe launch at Little Hunting Creek Park.

Response: [POD] At one time, a small privately-built dock existed in the area now known as Little Hunting Creek Park. When the dock became hazardous and unsafe, staff had to remove it. There are problems with access to this area and no place to park except in the private community. If a new dock is installed, then access and a parking area will be needed in order to allow use by those both in and outside of the immediately-adjacent community.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 238 Theme: Facility Reinvestment

Park: Bucknell Manor

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Bucknell Park

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: d. Bucknell Manor Park could be improved by planting trees to shade the seating area that's currently in an open area baked by the sun. The playing fields in this park seem underused; what plans does the FCPA have for it?

Response: The Master Plan for Bucknell Manor Park does reflect considerable areas of trees, which don't appear to be present in the park. This is an appropriate project for a community partnership and Mastenbrook Grant funding.
[POD] Landscaping has been attempted in the past, but there has been trouble keeping new plantings alive.
See also ID#139.

Action: No further action required.

ID# 239 Theme: Service Delivery

Park:

Appropriate for
GPGC Action?

Topic: Dog parks

Planning District: Mount Vernon

Comment: e. Locate a dog park in the northern part of the Mount Vernon district.

Response: In addition to the existing dog park at Grist Mill Park, a dog park is currently in the design phase for Lenclair Park located behind Beacon Mall. A dog park has also been approved as part of the North Hill Park Master Plan. Any development of the North Hill dog park, however, is pending transfer of the property to Park Authority ownership and allocation of funding.

Dog parks require a sponsoring group to partner with the Park Authority to assist with the development and operations of the dog park. Parking and safe access to the facility is also a requirement.

Action: Consider re-evaluation of the dog park service level standard with next Needs Assessment.
