



Fairfax County Park Authority

The Olander and Margaret Banks Neighborhood Park Master Plan



Approved May 25, 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE & PLAN DESCRIPTION

The purpose of a Master Plan is to create a long-range vision for the park by determining the best uses and resource management for a specific site. During the planning process, the site is considered in the context of the surrounding community and as one park of many within the Fairfax County Park Authority system. The approved, master plan will serve as a long-term decision making tool to be referred to before any planning, design/construction projects, resource management activities, or programming is initiated. Master Plans are meant to be flexible in order to accommodate changing park users' needs, and should be updated as necessary to reflect changes that have occurred both in and around the park site.



Typical site view of park

B. PLANNING PROCESS & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Park Authority initiated the public Master Plan process for the Olander and Margaret Banks Neighborhood Park at a public information meeting on May 5, 2010. This meeting was attended by over 30 community members. Comments at this meeting centered on desired park facilities, environmental features management, safety, traffic concerns, trail connections, site access and the existing structures on-site. A draft master plan has been developed based on site analysis and



PARK BACKGROUND

public input. Site analysis consists of evaluating existing site conditions, natural and cultural resources, site management, and design issues.

A. LOCATION & GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Olander and Margaret Banks Neighborhood Park (Banks Park) is located at 7400 Old Telegraph Road, Alexandria, Virginia. It is currently in transition from a private residence. It is located in the Lee Supervisory District. (Figure 1)

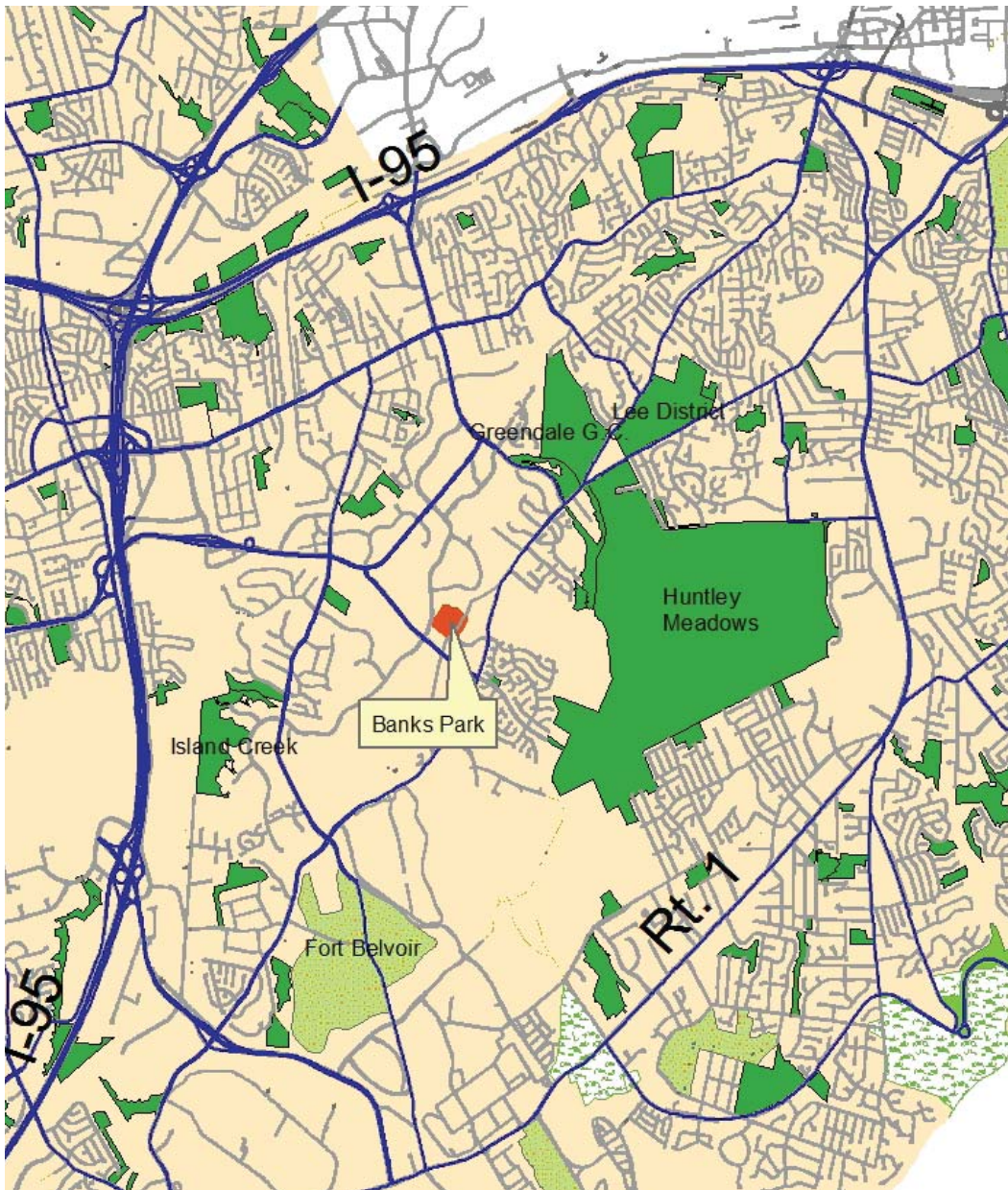


Figure 1: Location Map



PARK BACKGROUND

The site is 10 acres characterized by an open lawn with large canopy trees and four existing structures on the site:

- The main residence
- A garden house
- A concrete block garage
- A concrete block storage structure

There is also a small residential pool with a pump house.

A small stream bisects the property that is piped under most of the site.



Main House



Garage



Storage building

Figure 2: Banks Park Aerial Image



PARK BACKGROUND

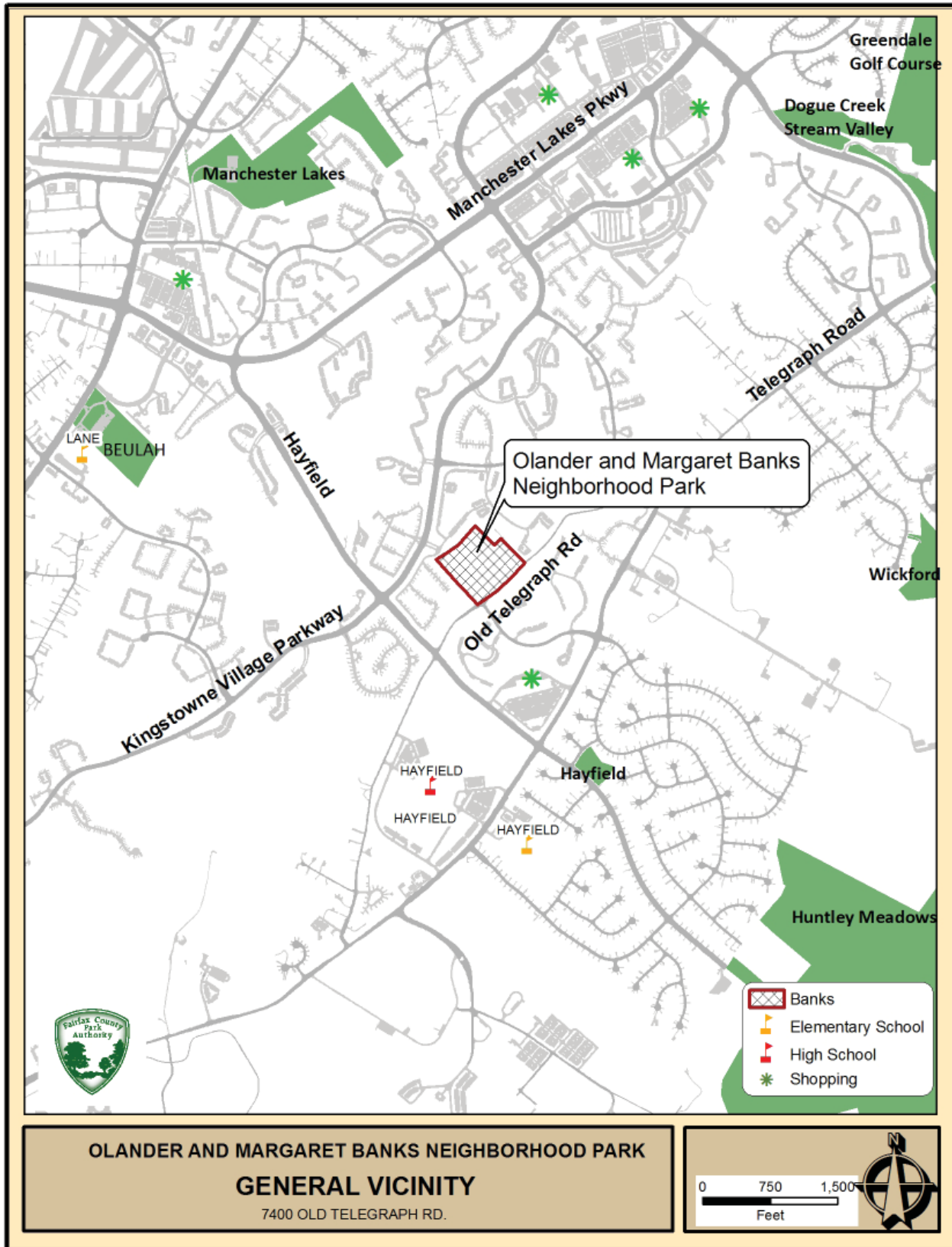


Figure 3: General Vicinity Map



PARK BACKGROUND

Banks Park



Figure 4: Area Parks

B. CONTEXT

Banks Park is surrounded on three sides by Kingstowne, a planned community consisting of townhomes and multifamily housing first constructed in the mid-1980s. The Hayfield View neighborhood, a townhome community, is located southwest of the park directly across Old Telegraph Road.

Banks Park is located in the Lehigh Community Sector (RH4) of the Rose Hill Planning District as described in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan. Surrounding areas are planned, zoned, and developed with residential uses ranging from one to eight units per acre. The site is in the R-1 residential zoning district that allows residential use at one to two dwelling units per acre and public facilities, such as parks. Parcels 91-4((1)) 21& 23 that comprise the park and Parcel 24 are planned for public park use.

The Countywide Trails Plan Map shows a trail to be located along Old Telegraph Road. The existing asphalt trail on the south side of Old



PARK BACKGROUND

Telegraph Road fulfills this requirement.

The park system in the area around Banks Park provides a range of offerings. Within two miles of Banks Park are eight County parks. There are also a number of recreation services available in the Kingstowne and Manchester Lakes neighborhoods adjacent to the park.

Nearby County parks provide recreational facilities, such as athletic fields and courts in addition to open space (Figure 3). Some offer unique facilities such as the Huntley Meadows wetlands preserve, Greendale Golf Course and Lee District Park offer a RECenter and multiple recreation facilities and large forested areas. Nearby Cultural Resource Parks include Huntley Mansion, Hayfield and Stoneybrook.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

This property was purchased by Olander and Margaret Banks in 1957. At the time of purchase, the site was undeveloped. Mr. Banks built the family home and added many outbuildings over the years. The Banks raised nine children on this site and enjoyed the property to its fullest. The 10-acre site was purchased by the Park Authority in 2001 from Mr. Banks who survived his wife. In 2005 the park was dedicated and a monument sign was installed by the family. The text on the sign provides a tribute to the Banks family and their commitment to preserving their special place for the community to enjoy.

“This site is preserved in perpetuity as a park, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Olander Banks Sr. who dedicates it in memory of his wife Margaret Lomax Banks. Olander Banks Sr. and Margaret L. Banks purchased this property in 1957. It was then an open gravel lot. Mrs. Banks suggested to her husband to use the vacant land to build a home at this site. Here, they built the 27 room home where they raised their nine children and for over four decades, they made it a peaceful oasis for family and friends. In the face of intense surrounding development, Olander Banks Sr. was inspired to be “One with the Dream” and share the estate with Fairfax County. The Fairfax County Park Authority established the Olander Banks Sr. and Margaret Lomax Banks Community Park in August 2001. Through his giving spirit and faith, Olander Banks Sr. has ensured that this will remain a special place for future generations to enjoy.”

As part of the purchase by the Park Authority, Mr. Banks, was granted a life estate that allowed him to reside at the property for the duration of his life. The life estate expired in January 2011.



PARK BACKGROUND



D. PARK CLASSIFICATION

Banks Park is designated as a Local Park in the Park Authority's classification system. Local parks primarily provide facilities for active and/or passive recreation, which may include areas for scheduled or unscheduled recreation activities or social gatherings, to serve local residential and employment centers. Areas designated for natural and/or cultural resource protection are also common features of local parks. In suburban settings, such as the Kingstowne neighborhood, park size will typically be between 2.5 and 50 acres. Typical local park facilities may include picnic areas, open play areas, playgrounds, trails, athletic fields, and courts. In a suburban setting, the local park service area may be up to three miles. The typical duration of visits to local parks will be two hours or less.

E. PARK & RECREATION NEEDS

The need for park and recreation facilities is determined through long range planning efforts. The Park Authority tracks inventory of facilities, looks at industry trends, surveys County citizen recreation demand, and compares itself with peer jurisdictions to determine park facilities needs

Park Facility Needs					
49,139	2007 population				
54,128	2020 projected population				
Facility	Service Level Standard	2007 Existing Facilities	2020 Needed Facilities	2020 Projected (Deficit)/ Surplus	2020 Projected Service Level
Rectangle Fields	1 field / 2,700 people	13	20	-7	65%
Adult Baseball Fields	1 field / 24,000 people	3.5	2.3	1.2	155%
Adult Softball Fields	1 field / 22,000 people	2	2.5	-0.5	81%
Youth Baseball Fields	1 field / 7,200 people	5	7.5	-2.5	67%
Youth Softball Fields	1 field / 8,800 people	9.5	6.2	3.3	154%
Basketball Courts	1 court / 2,100 people	11.5	25.8	-14.3	45%
Playgrounds	1 playground / 2,800 people	16	19.3	-3.3	83%
Neighborhood Dog Parks	1 dog park / 86,000 people	0	0.6	-0.6	0%
Neighborhood Skate Parks	1 skate park / 106,000 people	0	0.5	-0.5	

Table 1: Rose Hill Needs Assessment



PARK BACKGROUND

. The 2003-2013 Needs Assessment provides guidance for park needs. As part of the Needs Assessment process, the Park Authority Board adopted countywide service level standards for parkland and park facilities. Table 1 reflects projected local serving park facility needs in the Rose Hill Planning District. As development increases, preservation of open space as parkland becomes more important. The citizens who provided feedback during the master planning process emphasized the desire to preserve the existing character of the site. As the population in the area increases, more outdoor places are needed for leisure and recreation. Banks Park is a rare opportunity to provide an open green space in an existing urban area with opportunities to interact with nature and provide social interaction spaces and a focal point for the local community.



View from rear of park



EXISTING CONDITIONS



located along the southern corner of the site.

2. Topography

This site has generally moderate slopes. The site slopes from the northwest and southeast property boundaries towards the stream in the center. There is an area of steep slopes (>10%) along the northwest boundary. This area has an existing retaining wall consisting of weathered and eroded railroad ties that is in poor to bad condition. Slopes around the base of the house have been stabilized with rock and

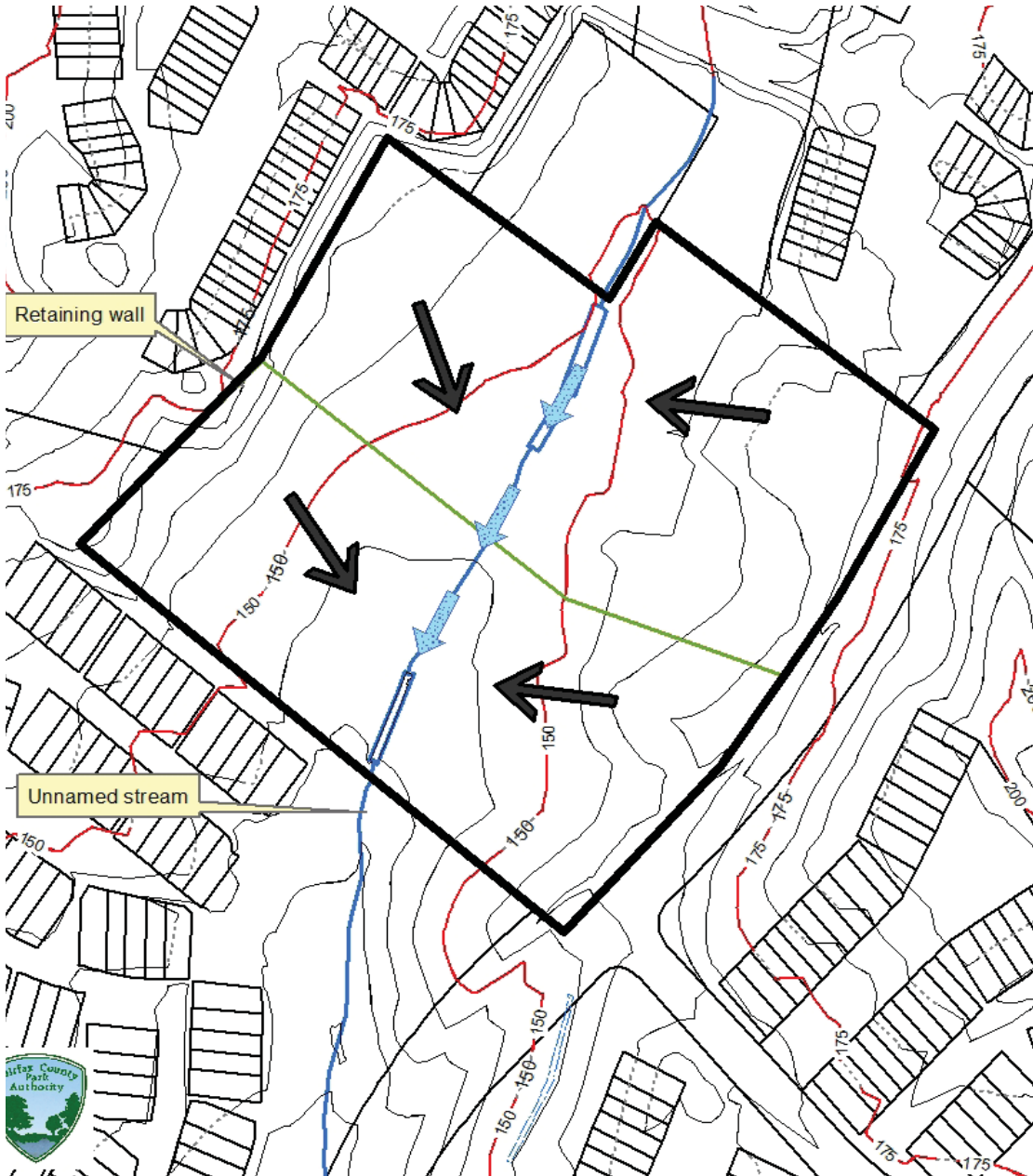


Figure 6: Topography Map



EXISTING CONDITIONS

3. Hydrology

The park is within the Dogue Creek watershed that is described in the Dogue Creek Watershed Management Plan :

“There are 888 acres of wetlands in the Dogue Creek watershed, primarily located in Huntley Meadows Park The large areas of undeveloped land on Fort Belvoir Military Reservation and Huntley Meadows Park help to protect the overall quality of the mainstem of Dogue Creek. The 2002 Stream Physical Assessment indicated that 50 percent of the stream channels were either unstable or experiencing active bank erosion. Habitat was determined to be primarily in the fair to poor range. In comparison with the rest of the County, the Dogue Creek watershed is in the lower range of quality.”

An unnamed tributary of Piney Branch bisects the park in the center from the northeast to the southwest. This is a perennial stream with Chesapeake Bay Ordinance designated Resource Protection Area (RPA) within 100 feet from both banks . Passive recreation uses, such as trails, are permitted in RPAs, but new, non-critical facilities are discouraged and require an exception permit to be built within this area. There is an existing paved parking area within the RPA. The stream enters and exits the site via Kingstowne Homeowner Association (HOA) lands. The stream section through the park is deeply channelized, with extensive riprap on the banks installed in an effort to address erosion. More than half of the stream is piped and has been since at least 1937 according to aerial photographs. The site is also the subject of recommendations within the draft Belle Haven, Dogue Creek and Four Mile Run watershed management plan that are currently subject to public review and should be approved in early 2011. Projects proposed for the park include a storm water retention area and daylighting the current piped stream.



Existing pipes in failure condition



EXISTING CONDITIONS

4. Vegetation

Banks Park is characterized by its open lawn areas and large canopy trees. Tree species include various mature oaks, Bradford pears and flowering cherries. There is limited shrub vegetation with the majority classified as foundation plantings around the main house.

The site has been continuously maintained and mowed since the late 1930s.

In the past, areas of the site have been used for vegetable gardens.

5. Wildlife

This site is open and has typical suburban wildlife habitat. The presence of deer and fox have been noted by the neighbors.

6. Rare Species

Though a survey has not been undertaken, archival research and observations indicate that there are no known endangered, threatened, or rare species occurring at Banks Park.

B. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The property has been occupied by the Banks family since the mid-1950s and contains buildings, structures that date to the mid-1950s. Preliminary examination suggests that these structures do not meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The property was subject to a preliminary archaeological assessment. The property has a moderate potential for the presence of archaeological resources and a moderate to high potential for historical archaeological resources.

C. EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Utilities

The park has access to public water and public electric services. There is an existing septic field that currently serves the house. The condition of this septic field is unknown.

2. Vehicular Access

A private driveway located along the northwest boundary serves as the entry to the site.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

3. Pedestrian Access and Trails

Though no official trails currently exist within Banks, some informal access points and footpaths are used by neighbors. In particular, there are paths from the Kingstowne HOA areas on the western and southern boundaries connecting to existing gates in the fence.

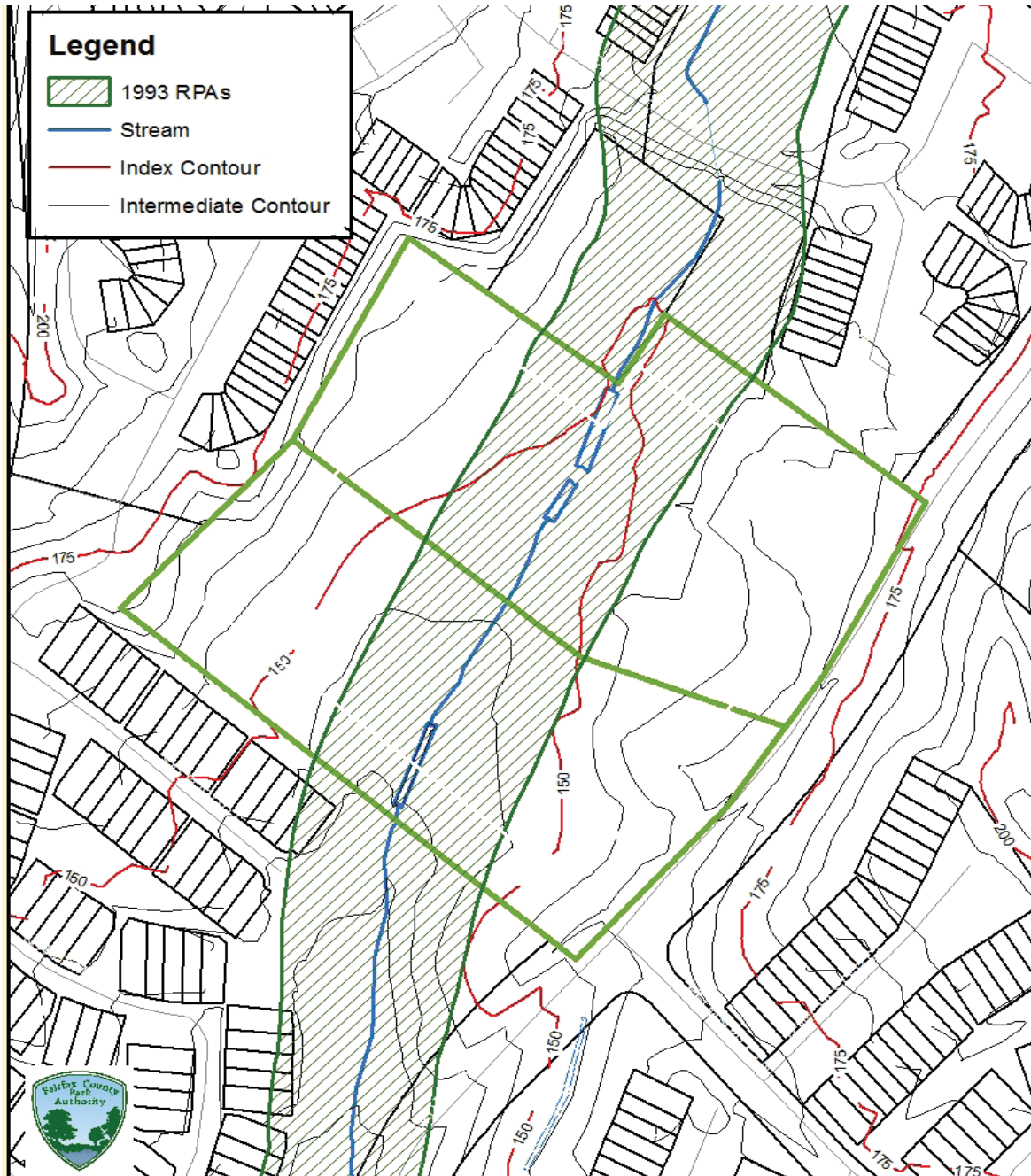


Figure 7: Environmental Map

PARK ASPIRATIONS

A. PARK PURPOSE

Park purpose statements provide an umbrella for planning and decision-making. The purpose of Banks Park is:

To address local leisure, social, and recreational needs.

To preserve the open space, scenic character and natural values of the property.

B. DESIRED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Banks Park is envisioned as a local park that will serve users from the adjacent neighborhoods and the larger community within the service area (roughly defined as a two-mile radius). The intention is to preserve a sense of the current landscape that has defined the site for decades, to inspire community gatherings while also providing community non-scheduled recreation opportunities that appeal to a variety of users. There should be an opportunity for future community sponsored uses such as an off-leash dog area or community garden plots.

Typical user visits would last from thirty minutes to two-hours. As such, the park will be unstaffed and will not include any major service facilities. Other visitor amenities may include benches, trashcans, picnic tables and shelters, and interpretative signage.

To facilitate the development of the recommended master plan elements, adequate park infrastructure, including an entrance, parking, storm water management facilities, and ADA access, may be required preceding the implementation of any public use.

C. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the park's purpose, the following objectives guide actions and strategies for dealing with management issues:

Banks Park should be a space for community gathering activities.

Banks Park will be managed to provide casual public recreational opportunities.

Park users should have universal access to any future park facilities when access is possible and feasible. This includes accessibility facilities and accessible connections between different areas of the park.



PARK ASPIRATIONS

Preservation, protection, interpretation, and enjoyment of natural and built landscape are integral to the Banks Park experience. Every effort should be made to balance resource stewardship with recreation needs.

The Park Authority's area maintenance crew will provide periodic maintenance and repairs to park facilities. This includes periodic mowing of the open and/or meadow areas, removing leaves from developed areas, trimming underbrush, emptying trash, and other similar tasks. Other maintenance tasks include inspection of facilities and equipment; cleanup; limbing-up of trees; tree removal; and repairing pavement as needed. The maintenance crew also responds to park maintenance issues brought to their attention by citizens or staff. Sponsored uses may be managed or maintained in a special manner consistent with the nature of such uses and will be provided primarily by the sponsor or as otherwise agreed.



GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



A. INTRODUCTION

The General Management Plan (GMP) uses the management objectives established in this master plan and consists of two parts. First, a text portion describes recommendations for future park uses and facilities and discusses design concerns to be considered when the GMP is implemented. The second part of the GMP is a graphic depiction of the recommended use zones and their general locations (Figure 8). A GMP builds on existing site conditions as described in the first section of this master plan. No site engineering has been conducted at this planning phase and therefore the GMP is general in its composition. Specific facility selection and locations will be based on future funding, site engineering, and community need.

The Banks GMP includes four distinct management areas: Activity Zone, Managed Natural Area and Stream Restoration Zone, Leisure Zone, and an Open Zone. These zones are recommended to be developed with uses and facilities that are consistent with the desired uses by the community expressed during the master plan process. Parkwide elements such as trails are also included and apply to all areas. The Plan Elements section that follows provides more definition to these zones.





Figure 8: General Management Plan



B. PLAN ELEMENTS

1. Trails

Trails are recommended and suitable for all zones. A conceptual trail circulation plan is depicted but all trails will be site located at the time of park design. A vehicle crossing will be needed within the Managed Natural Area and Stream Restoration Zone to support maintenance access to the northwest portion of the park. It is recommended that two pedestrian crossings be designed across the stream to support the trail network around the site and connect different use zones. Trails can be a mix of hard and natural surfaces and will form an established path that facilitates access and resource protection. ADA accessibility and maintenance access should be provided wherever possible and feasible. The ultimate trail design and location will be site located as specific uses and facilities are developed. On-site trails should be provided as needed. The Park Authority should work with Kingstowne to create new trails and connections within abutting Kingstowne HOA lands.

2. Interpretation

Interpretation is appropriate and suitable in all zones. The existing Banks Family monument sign shall remain in a prominent location within the site as it conveys the history of the Banks family's life on the site. An existing historical marker for the nearby African American settlement of Carrolltown is located in Kingstowne. Although this settlement was not on the Banks site, the connection of the African American experience may provide an additional opportunity for interpretation. Potential subjects for interpretation include:

- A. The Banks Family History
- B. Local African American History and/or Carrolltown
- C. Stream Restoration
- D. Community Gardens

Interpretation elements can range from small markers, to traditional interpretation plaques, to an information kiosk if desired.

3. Activity Zone

This area of the site contains the house, parking area, entrance, and some outbuildings and as a result is highly disturbed within this area. The development of active and support park facilities is suitable in this zone. This zone location minimizes potential impacts to park neighbors



GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



from facility use. Facility development and utilization is dependent on funding and need at the time of development. Potential facilities suitable for development and use within the Activity Zone include:

A. Vehicular Entrance & Parking Lot

The optimum location for a vehicle entrance would be in this area. Parking should be located in the activity zone as much as possible. Parking at this location would support uses in the entire park. The parking lot size and ultimate number of spaces will be determined by the actual uses developed.

B. Multi-Purpose Courts

Half or full-sized multi-purpose courts are an appropriate potential use in the Activity Zone. Sand volleyball would also be appropriate in this area.

C. Off Leash Dog Area

As part of the community review and input process, a desire was expressed for an off-leash dog area within the park. No dog parks currently exist in Kingstowne or the surrounding neighborhoods. Many off-leash dog areas become focal points for community activity and help to build a sense of community. A minimum size of 0.25 acre and a preferred size of 0.5 acre or larger is recommended for an off-leash dog area. If feasible, the dog park design should compliment and blend into the open nature of the site, including fencing and landscape design. Typically off-leash dog areas are enclosed with a five-foot high galvanized black vinyl coated chain link fence. Access to water should be made available for the dog park.

Fairfax County Park Authority dog parks are operated as public/private partnerships, developed in cooperation with sponsoring organizations of pet owners. The sponsors are the agency's liaison between facility users and local residents, animal control officials, and the police department. They monitor and clean the facilities; publicize and enforce dog park regulations; and report maintenance needs. If no sponsor agrees to assist in the operation of this facility, this area will remain undeveloped or incorporated within adjacent uses depending on the ultimate design.

4. Managed Natural Area and Stream Restoration Zone

This property has an existing stream bisecting the site. The stream is



GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



controlled with man made channels and underground pipes. Stream restoration will allow for removal of the pipe from the stream to daylight.

Re-engineering the stream bed to promote a more natural function is desirable together with management of the areas within the zone as meadow and stream edges. Restoration may also include the potential development of a water control structure along the south west boundary of the site.

Suitable activities and elements include trails with benches, interpretation, education, rest areas, and designated spaces for user interaction with the stream. There should be a vehicle crossing to allow for park maintenance vehicles and at least one separate pedestrian crossing within the park trail system.

5. Leisure Zone

This area of the park contains open lawn area and many large canopy trees. This landscape should be maintained as near as possible to its current state. The area is suitable for casual picnic areas including picnic tables and a shelter, a natural looking playground, trails and rest areas. Maintenance of this area should include a long-term tree replacement program to maintain the tree canopy.

A parking area of 30 to 50 spaces may be needed to accommodate a picnic shelter use but could require more depending on the ultimate shelter size and should be appropriately sized.

6. Open Zone

This zone is designated to remain primarily open lawn to preserve the open character of the landscape. This area is suitable for unstructured activities, play apparatus, and general park uses. Trails may be located within this zone but should generally be located along the perimeter. During the course of the master plan process, there was a desire to have a location for community gardens. Community gardens are appropriate in communities such as Kingstowne and Alexandria where private yards are limited. This use will need to be developed in cooperation with a sponsor and will be regulated under Park Authority rules and a sponsor agreement.





C. DESIGN CONCERNS

Required plans will be prepared and submitted for County review and approval prior to development. These plans will be reviewed for applicable county and state codes and requirements, as well as how plans address potential impacts. When site design, plan submittal and development occur, the following concerns should be considered:

Accessibility

Accessible park elements and facilities should be provided wherever possible and feasible. This includes accessibility facilities and accessible connections between different areas of the park.

Stream Restoration

The Managed Natural Area along the stream at Banks Park is intended to improve ecosystem function and serve as a park amenity. This area offers the opportunity for park users to interact with the open water (stream) and observe the restoration of a functioning stream system.

Parking and Vehicle Access

Vehicle access to the park will only be allowed off of Old Telegraph Road. The Park Authority should work closely with VDOT to determine the most suitable location for a vehicle entrance. Care should be taken to avoid any location that would require removal of large canopy trees thus altering the character of the park. Facilities requiring parking should be minimized or combined to reduce the parking development on the site.

Utilities

Community gardens and off-leash dog areas both have a need for water. Water service is available at this site in the area of the existing house. Water service to a potential community garden area will require crossing the stream. Electrical service may be needed for picnic shelters.





Cultural Resources

In any area that will be subject to ground disturbance, a field assessment should occur to determine if the area has been previously disturbed. If the impact area exhibits subsurface integrity, a Phase I survey should occur.

Evaluation of Existing Residence and Structures

The residence and other existing structures will be evaluated for any potential re-use or demolition per Park Policy 405, paragraph 1 which states:

“Houses and other structures which have been evaluated and determined to be suitable for occupancy or other public uses consistent with park purposes shall be retained, until such time as their continued existence is no longer justified.”

Retention and reuse of the existing residence will limit the ability to provide additional recreation facilities in the Activity Zone.

Monument Sign

Future development of the park will require some frontage dedication along Old Telegraph Road. The existing monument sign is located very close to the existing roadway and may require relocation. Future park development should include relocating the sign to an appropriate location elsewhere in the park.

