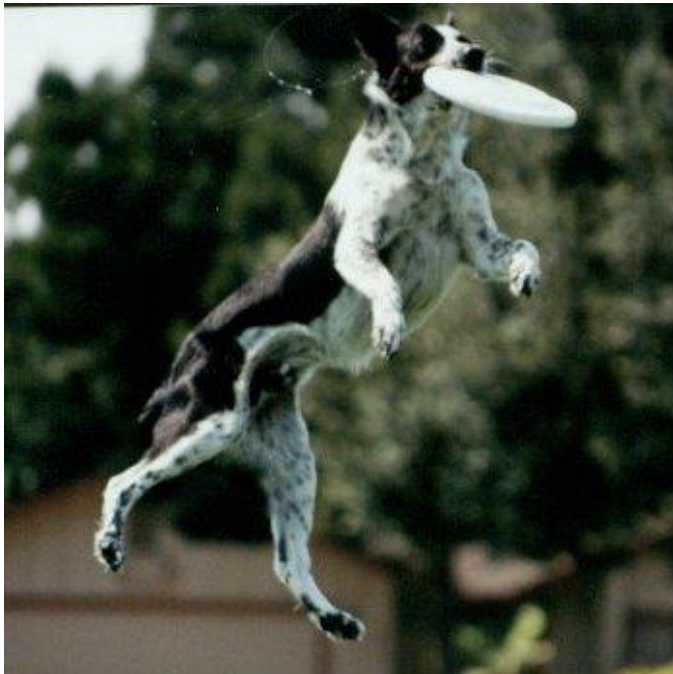


# **MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT FOR MASON DISTRICT PARK**



**Approved 8/1/01**

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY  
AUGUST 2001**

# **Fairfax County Park Authority Mason District Park Master Plan Amendment**

August 2001

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Purpose and Plan Description
- B. Property Description
- C. Park History

### **II. PARK CLASSIFICATION**

- A. District Park

### **III. EXISTING FACILITIES**

- A. Listing of Existing Facilities

### **IV. EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS**

- A. Natural Resources
- B. Cultural Resources

### **V. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- A. Mason Dog Park Coalition Recommendations
- B. Description of the New Plan Element
  - 1. Off Leash Dog Area
  - 2. Open Play Area
  - 3. Parking Area
  - 4. Landscape Buffer Areas
- C. Design Concerns
  - 1. Ground Cover
  - 2. Parking Facilities
  - 3. Landscaping and Berming

### **Attachments**

- Original Master Plan – Revised in 1979
- Proposed Master Plan Amendment

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Purpose and Plan Description**

The purpose of this master plan amendment is to update the plan that was first approved in 1974 and revised in 1979. Since approved, this plan has served as a guide for all planning of the site. Recently, the Mason District Dog Opportunity Group (DOG) have been meeting periodically to discuss ideas for the addition of an Off-Leash Dog Area within the park. This master plan amendment is a means to update the plan by adding a dog park and other new elements to the park. When approved, this document will serve as a guide for all future planning on the site and should be referred to before any planning and design projects are initiated.

The plan will describe the facility to be developed based on a variety of factors, how it fits into the established plan, where it will be constructed and how it will be operated in conjunction with other areas of the park and existing uses.

### **B. Property Description**

Mason District Park is located at 6621 Columbia Pike in Annandale Virginia. It is located in a highly developed area in the Mason Supervisory District. It is classified as a District Park and is 121 acres in size. The northern boundary consists of the Sleepy Hollow Woods and Overlook Knolls Subdivisions. The eastern boundary is a continuation of the Sleepy Hollow Woods Subdivision. The Southern Boundary is the Pinecrest Heights Subdivision and the Columbia Heights Elementary School Property. The western boundary is made up of the Columbia Oaks and Roberts Place Subdivisions.

### **C. Park History**

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) acquired approximately 60 acres of the 121acre property in 1971. A Master Plan was developed in 1974 and the park officially opened in June 1977. An additional 61 acres was added when the FCPA negotiated an Interim Use Agreement with the Fairfax County School Board in 1975. The 61 acres was then legally transferred to the FCPA in 1978 which led to a Master Plan Revision in 1979.

## **II. PARK CLASSIFICATION**

### **A. District Park**

District Parks provide diversified area-wide recreation services to several sectors of the County; are intended to support extended day use for both informal and organized activities; and to protect and interpret identified natural and cultural resources. A district park may be located anywhere in the County outside of Urban Centers, preferably with access by secondary or arterial roads. Access should be available by the Countywide

Trail System to encourage pedestrian and bicycle trips; access by public transit is highly desirable. On-site parking is required. A District Park may be from 50-200 acres. Depending on site characteristics, District Parks may combine large complexes of intensively developed facilities with extensive natural areas. The extent of development will depend on topography, extent of environmentally sensitive land and amount of developable area. Lighted facilities and extended hours of operation are expected. Development may include all neighborhood and community park facilities at a greater scale with athletic field complexes or a recreation center.

### **III. EXISTING FACILITIES**

#### **A. Listing of Existing Facilities**

The following facilities are currently existing at Mason District Park:

- 65' Diamond Field-Lighted (1)
- 60' Diamond Field- Lighted (1)
- Rectangular Field –Lighted (1)
- Rectangular Field (1)
- Basketball Courts – Lighted (2)
- Tennis Courts – Lighted (6)
- Shuffleboard – (2)
- Concession Center
- Amphitheatre
- Bike Trail
- Fitness Trail
- Hiking Trail
- Nature Trail
- Historic Trail
- Natural Areas
- Open Play Areas
- Picnic Areas
- Playground Area
- Tot Lot
- Historic Area
- Restrooms
- Parking Lot (224 spaces including accessible spaces)

### **IV. EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS**

#### **A. Natural Resources**

Mason District Park is located on the Fall Line between the Piedmont Upland and Coastal Plain geologic regions of northern Virginia. The park is characterized by rolling slopes and exhibits practically the entire range of indigenous ecological succession zones. The site also ranges in slope from 0-10% and greater. Two – thirds of the park consists of slopes greater than 10%. The entire site drains into Turkeycock Run.

The existing vegetation is made up of five distinct vegetative communities that include New Meadow, Reverting Meadow, Turkeycock Stream Valley, Mixed Upland Hardwood and Mature Forest. There are several areas that are classified as disturbed areas. Disturbed areas are identified as areas that have been adversely affected by man. These areas have extreme soil compaction and a lack of ground cover. This is the classification for the portion of land this Master Plan Amendment is concerned with.

## **B. Cultural Resources**

A review of the files for Mason District Park indicates a large archaic Indian site lies close to the 6 acres planned developed. Due to the proximity of the archaic site, a field survey was conducted that included a walk-over and the excavation of 8 shovel test pits. The results of the survey was negative for cultural resources on the proposed development area of 6 acres.

Further archaeological testing will be required if additional areas are designated for development. Cultural Resources in Mason District Park, besides the archaic Indian site, include house foundation ruins, an early road bed, a 19th century trash midden, bridge abutments and a small undefined prehistoric scatter. Additional cultural resources are likely to exist.

# **V. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR MASON DISTRICT PARK**

The purpose of the Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) is to incorporate a description of the concept plan element, design concerns, and plan (map) that show the general location of the recommended facilities.

## **A. Mason Dog Park Coalition Recommendation**

The “Mason District Dog Opportunity Group” (DOG) was established to bring Off-Leash Dog Areas to eastern Fairfax County and is working with the FCPA to identify viable sites for this activity. Mason District DOG also works within the community to promote responsible dog ownership and publicize the need for dog parks. After reviewing several sites within the district, the Mason District DOG selected the unused six-acre portion of Mason District Park as a good location for a dog park. This site is located in the southwestern corner of the park and seems to be an ideal location. This is a recommendation for updating the master plan and for creating a more dog friendly park utilizing an Off-Leash Dog Area. Their proposal would be funded by donated and Park Authority funds and volunteered time and effort from local civic organizations.

## **B. Description of the New Plan Elements**

### **1. Off-leash Dog Area**

Approximately 44,000 square feet of designated open space will be fully enclosed. An FCPA approved galvanized chain link fence (black vinyl coated) shall be 5 feet in height. The chain link fabric shall be crimped at both the top and bottom to assure safety to both dogs and people. The chain link portions shall be adequately entrenched or appropriately anchored to assure that no dog may burrow under. Double gated entryways will be provided for safety and to provide a neutral zone for dogs to be

leashed/unleashed. The neutral zones shall be more than adequate in size to contain handlers and dogs. Single, large, gated openings will be installed to allow access to mowing and maintenance vehicles. During fence installation, every reasonable effort will be taken to ensure that wildlife will not be entrapped within the enclosure. Access to water should be made available for the dog park.

## **2. Open Play Area**

In keeping with the original Master Plan, an Open Play Area is still going to be a part of the overall design for this part of the park. A 44,000 SF Open Play Area is going to be located next to the Dog Park for activities such as pick-up game and kite flying.

## **3. Parking Area**

A small parking area is recommended to accommodate 30 cars. It is proposed to be located on the northwestern corner of the site. A 24' wide entrance road would connect the parking area with Pinecrest Parkway.

## **4. Landscaping and Berming**

Landscape planting and berming is recommended for the edge of the park that borders the Pinecrest Heights Townhouse Development. Acting as a visual buffer to the proposed elements within the park, the berming height should be varied so as not to enclose the residents totally from the park but to filter some of the views into the park. Planting the berm with small ornamental trees and shrubs will enhance the transition between the townhouses and the park property. While the inclusion of ornamental grasses and perennials will add color and interest to the design.

## **C. Design Concerns:**

### **1. Ground Cover**

The preferred ground cover for Off-Leash Dog Areas is grass (turf). It will be acceptable to the FCPA for an Off-Leash Dog Area to consist partially or in whole of only dirt, if as a result, no negative environmental or aesthetic impact to the surrounding area and its human activities exists. Employment of ground cover other than grass, or that which is already present, must be approved by the FCPA.

The FCPA and sponsors will develop a turf management program for the Off-Leash Dog Area. Grass surfaces may be maintained at a lower standard and appearance than other FCPA grounds. The turf management program may consist of:

- Research and development opportunities;
- Maintenance and renovation schedules;
- Environmental partnerships with businesses and/or academia;
- Off-Leash Dog Area rotating use/non-use schedules; and,
- Long-term plans to fund and implement resources.

## **2. Parking Facilities/Access Road**

Because of a fairly large stand of white pines that were planted as a buffer for the townhouse development to screen the views to the school, the access road into the park from Pinecrest Boulevard may encroach onto school property to avoid having to remove the trees. An interim-use agreement between the FCPA and the FCPS would be required to allow the FCPA to construct the access road on school property. Another less desirable option would be to remove the existing stand of white pine to avoid encroaching on school property.

The current parking count for two parking areas is as follows:

Northern-most parking area	– 154 spaces; 10 ADA spaces
Southern-most parking area	– 56 spaces; 4 ADA spaces
Both areas combined can accommodate 224 cars.	

The proposed parking area would add an additional 30 parking spaces.

## **3. Landscaping and Berming**

Consideration should be taken to provide breaks within the proposed landscape buffer to allow for access points from the townhouse development into the park. Care should also be taken when designing the landscape buffer to maintain positive drainage from the townhouse development into the existing drain inlet that is located on the parkland.