



Fairfax County Park Authority

June 2002



Towers Park

Approved 6/26/02

Fairfax County Park Authority Towers Park General Management Plan & Conceptual Development Plan

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Plan Description

The purpose of this General Management Plan (GMP) is to serve as a guide for all future planning, design and programming at the park. This document should be referred to before future planning and design projects are initiated. Research has been conducted on the existing natural and cultural resources and should be referred to prior to any site-specific decision-making.

This GMP (see page 15) describes the existing natural and cultural resources of the park, as well as the existing facilities. Descriptions of adjacent park uses are included to provide a context for regional park planning.

Management zones have been established with accompanying lists of potential uses for each zone. The uses are described in general terms, so that as visitor needs change, the uses provided can change.

Recommendations for future planning, design and construction projects are described in the final section of this plan. It is not the intent of this plan to develop the specifics of each future plan but to state what plans and projects are needed to meet the goals of the GMP and the needs of park visitors.

General Management Plans are meant to be flexible, in order to adjust with the changing needs of park visitors. Every GMP should be updated periodically to reflect changes that have occurred both on and off-site. GMP's are only one part of an integrated Park

Management Plan. After the GMP is completed, the recommended plans and projects shown in the final section of this document should be initiated. With the finalized GMP, a Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) and a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) can be accomplished to coordinate and integrate the various proposed projects; thus completing the Park Management Plan.

B. Park Description

Towers Park is located at 9350 Arlington Boulevard in Fairfax, Virginia. It is bounded on the North by Route 29, to the east by the Stonehurst subdivision (a townhouse community) and on the west by Blake Lane and the Circle Towers Apartment and a townhouse community. There is a baseball field and a playground located in the southern portion of the park. A paved trail runs through



the entire length of this section of the park. Another parcel of land has been included in this Master Plan which is the 11.72 acre parcel to the south across Rt. 50. This parcel was acquired from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and is bounded on the north by Route 50, on the east by The Virginian (a nursing home facility), to the south by Accotink Creek and on the west by Pickett

Road. This section of the park has not been developed.

The park is classified as a Community Park and is 27.6 total acres in size.

C. Park History

1. History of Land Ownership

The outlines of the ownership and land-use history for Towers Park are based on land records associated with the property that has become this park. This history is also useful in that it helps us determine which areas are most likely to contain significant historical cultural resources. Finally, in the event that historical resources are located on the ground, this history gives us a head start in identifying, dating, and determining the significance of those resources.

Historic research describes the parcel within the subdivision as 61 acres of a larger parcel of 444 acres, which was subdivided by John Moore in 1832. Within the subdivision Lot 3 was roughly the same parcel then as it is today. Several portions of the parcel have been sold but the current park, north of Route 50, is approximately the same as the lot division in 1832. Lot 3 was also described as containing the "Mill Lot" as transferred to Charles Hall and Hiram Fuller from John Moore on 27 December 1847. Hiram Fuller applied to build "a grist and sawmill" in 1847. This mill has been documented on the 1862 McDowell Map as the "Old Mill" and is further referenced in the Archaeological Site Files as the "Fairfax Circle Mill". Preliminary field reconnaissance has re-located the millrace, and milldam. The parcel was then

sold to Isaac Wilbert from Ira Williams on 17 July 1858. The parcel was sold from Isaac and Hanna (Isaac's wife) to John A Siebert on 01 October 1873 for \$1,500. The mill parcel passed through several additional ownerships and then was passed to the Shenandoah Loan and Trust due to a forfeiture of a loan. The Shenandoah Loan and Trust sold the parcel to H.W. Stewart on 21 January 1942 for \$2,500. The parcel was passed to Warren and Roberta Stewart (heirs of H.W. Stewart) who sold the property to Circle Towers Associates in 1973. The property was subdivided into two separate parcels. The first tract was 37.7 acres part of which includes the new parcel south of Arlington Blvd. and the second tract was 14.86 acres (most of what is now the current Towers Park).

2. Summary of Land Record Research

The review of land records and previous archaeological assessments associated with the property that is now Towers Park illustrates that the property contains several prehistoric sites and the remains of the Fairfax Circle Mill. A recent archaeological reconnaissance has relocated the millrace and milldam along Accotink Creek.

The area of the park with the greatest potential for historic resources is a rectangular tract of land bordered on the south by Accotink Creek. This area extends east roughly to the present-day location of an ephemeral stream channel. Remains of 19th century domestic structures associated with the Fairfax Circle Mill may be found within this area. It is located at the extreme southeastern portion of the newly acquired property.

II. PARK PURPOSE & SIGNIFICANCE

A. Park Purpose: What is the purpose of the park?

Park Purpose statements are intended to provide an umbrella for planning and decision-making. If a proposed use conflicts with any one of the purposes listed, it will be considered an incompatible use. By establishing park purposes, future plans can remain flexible as legislative requirements and visitor preferences change. The purpose of Towers Park is to:

- Preserve and protect cultural resources
- Preserve and protect natural resources
- Provide active recreation for citizens of Fairfax County

It may appear that some of these statements conflict. The purpose statements are not intended to be mutually exclusive. They are intended to be integrated into a common purpose of protecting the existing resources and providing recreational opportunities.

B. Significance Statement: Why is this park significant?

Towers Park plays an important role within the Fairfax County Park system. The park provides open space for both active and passive recreation and is rich in cultural resources.

C. Visitor Experiences: What will the visitor experience at this park?

- Visitors will be able to participate in a number of passive and active recreational activities.

- Visitors will learn of important cultural resources through educational interpretation. This process plays an important role in maintaining the fragile chain of understanding that our rich heritage provides us.

D. Park Classification

1. Community Park

Community Parks provide a variety of individual and organized recreation activities conveniently located for short term visits. The park may be located in residential neighborhoods and Suburban Centers. Community parks primarily support active recreation, including organized sports; the site may be intensely developed, in part, while still providing a moderate amount of vegetated open space for buffers. All facilities planned for a neighborhood Park could also be located in a Community Park.



Facility development may include athletic fields, court facilities, picnic, playground, tot-lot, garden plots, fitness stations, trails and parking. Parking is provided on-site or co-located with appropriate adjoining development. The park size will typically be 10-50 acres, serving several neighborhoods. Service area is 5 to 10 minute



drive or 15-20 minute bicycle trip. Depending on the density of surrounding communities, the service area generally extends up to 3 miles.

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. Administrative History

The Fairfax County Park Authority acquired the northern parcel in June 1979 and the southern parcel in December 2000.

B. Existing Facilities

The following facilities are currently existing at Towers Park:

- 65' Diamond Field w/ rectangular field overlay
- Bike Trail / Hiking Trail (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority maintained)
- Picnic Areas
- Tot Lot
- Parking Lot (28 spaces including accessible spaces)



C. Natural Resources

Towers Park is located in an area where Mixed Mesic Forest associations are found. Common communities or vegetation types in the Mixed Mesic Forest associations include northern



hardwoods, mixed mesophytic forests, mesic oak and mesic oak-pine forests, mesic mixed hardwood forests and acidic cove forests including white pine, hardwood-eastern hemlock and white-pine hemlock/hardwood. Please refer to the Forest Stand Delineation found in the attachments.

1. Slopes (see page 8)

A slope analysis of the park was completed that defined slopes of 0-5%, 5-7%, 7-10% and over 10%. At least one-quarter of the northern and southern sections have slopes greater than 10%. Those areas that are in the 0-5% range are primarily near the flood plain areas in the southern section and are found in the active recreation areas in the northern section of the park. Generally, the most desirable areas for recreational activities occur on slopes of less than 5%.

2. Soils (see page 10)

A total of 10 soil types are found within the park boundaries. A brief summary of each soil type is included. (see page 8)

TOWERS PARK GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN & CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Slope Map

Legend

-  +10% SLOPES
-  7-10% SLOPES
-  5-7% SLOPES
-  0-5% SLOPES

Prepared By:

Fairfax County Park Authority

Towers Park Master Plan



a. Mixed Alluvial Land - Flood Plain, soil type #1

This soil is derived from recent soil materials which have washed from the uplands and deposited along the stream bottoms. It is subject to frequent flooding and needs drainage in many places.

b. Chewacla Silt Loam - Flood Plain, soil type #2

This classification occurs on level to nearly level stream bottoms and is subject to flooding. The soil is moderately acid. (Ph 5.5-6.0)

c. Worsham Silt Loam, soil type #8

Worsham silt loam is a poorly drained, gray, flat, soil that occurs along foot slopes and upper drainageways.

d. Glenville Silt Loam, soil type #10

Glenville silt loam is found in saddles between major drainage sheds and on lower footslopes influenced by seepage. Runoff is moderately slow. The available water holding capacity is moderate to high.

e. Meadowville Silt Loam, soil type #20

Meadowville silt loam occurs mainly in depressions at the heads of drains and along upper drainage ways. Natural fertility and water holding capacity are moderate to high.

f. Manor Silt Loam, soil type #21

Manor silt loam is a porous excessively drained, loamy soil. Runoff and internal drainage are medium to rapid. Natural fertility and water-holding capacity are low.

g. Fairfax Silt Loam, soil type #32

Fairfax silt loam is developed on old high lying land areas. It usually occupies ridge tops and is fairly extensive. The soil has moderately slow internal drainage, because of the pan layers in the subsoil

h. Glenelg Silt Loam, soil type #55

This is a moderately deep, well-drained loamy soil. Depth to hard rock is generally from 10 to more than 50 feet. Natural fertility is low.

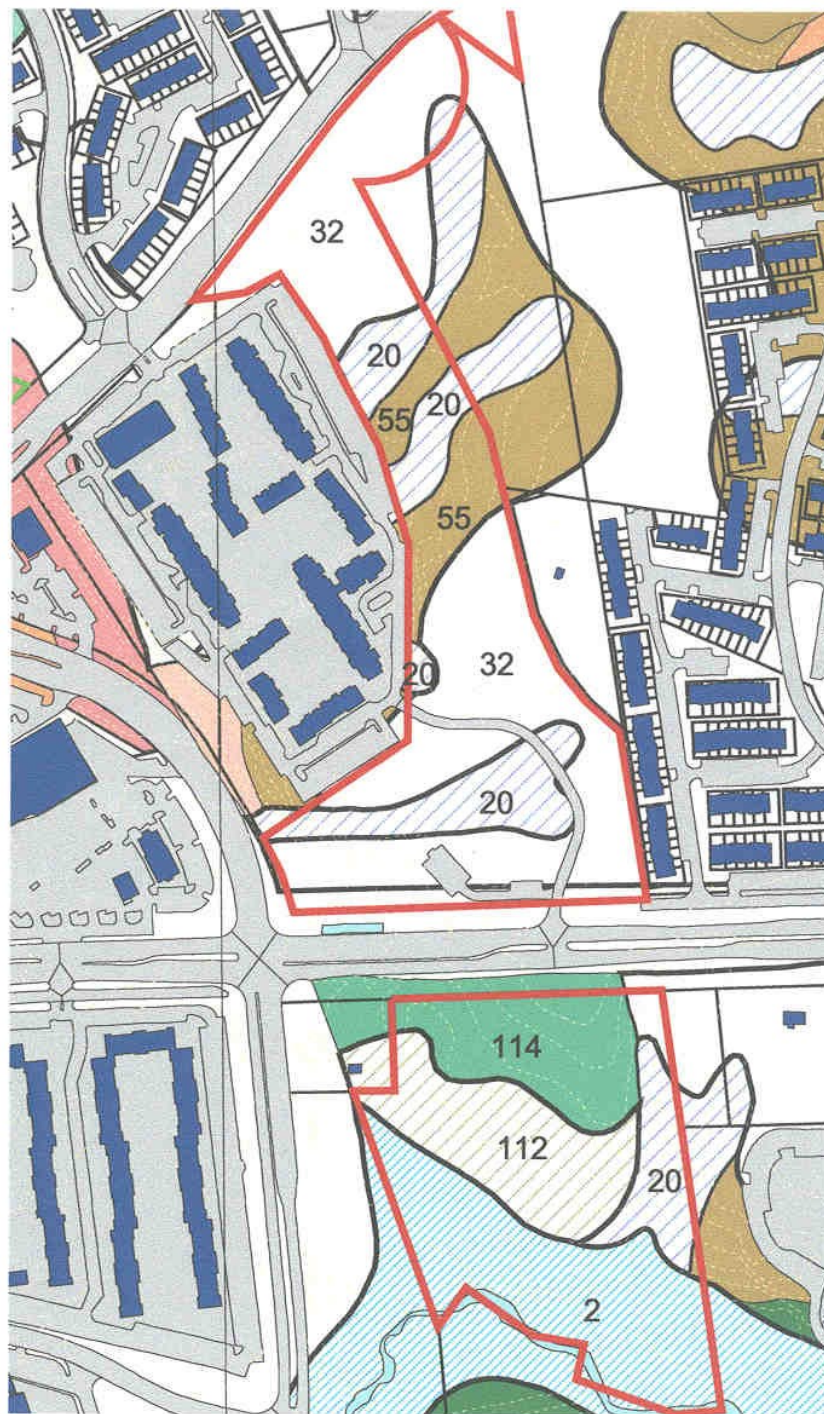
i. Augusta Silt Loam, soil type #112

This soil is moderately deep, somewhat poorly drained soil that occurs on low stream terraces. It is derived from soil materials that have washed principally from soils of the Piedmont Uplands.

j. Masada Sandy Loam, soil type #114




A deep to very deep well-drained soil, which is developed from loamy and gravelly old alluvium washed from the soils of the Piedmont upland. It is strongly acidic, low in organic matter content and natural fertility.

TOWERS PARK GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN & CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Soils Map

Scale: 1" = 400'

-  **Group A Soils** - A Geotechnical engineering report is required
-  **Group B Soils** - A Geotechnical engineering report may not be required if the site plan includes adequate provisions to address soil related problems.
-  **Group C Soils** - A Geotechnical engineering report is not required as long as construction is in natural soils and not in disturbed soil or fill

Prepared By:
Fairfax County Park Authority
Towers Park



D. Cultural Resources

1. Prehistoric Cultural Resources

Towers Park contains five previously recorded prehistoric Native American sites. One site is recorded on the existing portion of Towers Park. The Cultural Resource Protection Group (CRP) conducted a second site visit recently and found the site intact with both surface and subsurface artifact deposits. Several other sites immediately adjacent to the existing portion of Towers Park also remain.

The newly acquired parcel contains four previously recorded Native American sites. The Brazier Site was initially identified by the recovery of a chert projectile point in 1976 located in nearby Accotink Creek. Archaeological investigations indicated that the site was occupied from the Late Archaic Period and into the late Middle Woodland period (ca. 5,000 BC to AD 1,000). The site may well extend farther back into prehistory, as prior excavations did not fully define the vertical extent of the site. Artifacts recovered include a large number of ceramic sherds, consisting of two discreet chronological periods. Crushed quartz tempered sherds are diagnostic of the Early and Middle Woodland periods and shell tempered wares are found in the latter stages of the Late Woodland period. These tempering agents indicate occupations that span approximately 2000 years in the Woodland period (ca. 1000 BC to 1000 AD). The presence of ceramics is rare in upland settings, away from major waterways, as they are generally associated with larger and more permanent habitation sites. A number of chronologically diagnostic projectile points

were also recovered, including side notched points from the Late Archaic Period. Selby Bay points (which are often found with crushed quartz ceramics) were also recovered, as well as much later associated triangular projectile points which are a component of the Late Woodland period of prehistory (1000 AD to European contact).

The parcel also contains three other Native American sites, known collectively as the Brazier Site Complex. These other sites are likely related to prehistoric quarrying activities, as substantial quartz outcrops are noted on the terraces above the flood plain that contains the Brazier Site. The presence of these recorded sites in the vicinity tells us that Native Americans favored this area prior to the European settlement of the land. Native Americans may also have used other level, dry areas in close proximity to Accotink Creek. The availability of stone for tool manufacture, both in the form of cobbles in the stream and in quartz outcroppings on the higher ground, would have added to the value of this general location. The Brazier Site location would have also provided a fresh water source, as well as an abundant supply of edible plants and animals.

2. Archaeologist Recommendations

The newly acquired portion of the Towers Park parcel represents a nearly pristine landscape of prehistory, with both lithic workshops and a habitation site. Site complexes such as these can provide a vast amount of knowledge in prehistoric technology, subsistence, settlement and site structure within a regional framework. This is a rare occurrence in any location and is of

special importance to the prehistory of Fairfax County. The Brazier Site has already yielded evidence of Native American presence that dates back at least 3,000 years, and there is evidence of much earlier occupations, noted by the recovery of a projectile point adjacent to the site in Accotink Creek. Careful consideration should be given to such a unique environment, as the parcel is currently slated for development in the form of trails and ball fields. The Fairfax County Heritage resource Management Plan states in Chapter IV that significant cultural resources should be preserved in place through the application of various preservation tools as appropriate. The CRP recommends preserving all of the known archaeological sites in the new portion of Towers Park.

IV. MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The management framework integrates research, site analysis and basic data presented in this document. Management zones have been defined to provide a framework for decision-making. Existing conditions were considered in the development of the management zones. The framework provides broad flexibility within a range of potential uses for each management zone.

The "Potential Uses" stated for the zone describes what uses are acceptable for each zone. If a use is not listed for a zone, by its omission, it is considered an incompatible use for that zone. The potential uses are intentionally general to allow flexibility when making future decisions.

A. Resource Protection Zone

The majority of land areas within both parcels

should be protected in a Resource Protection Zone (RPZ) based on information from the Natural Resource Inventory and Cultural Resource surveys and steep slopes found in the park. The RPZ should also include a buffer area adjacent to residential properties surrounding the parcel. Buffers between the recreational areas of the park will remain undeveloped and may additionally be planted with appropriate vegetation to further limit sound travel and lines of sight. Human impact in this zone will be kept to a minimum. Management of the natural resources will be allowed, however, new structures or environmental degradation of this zone shall be prohibited.

Potential Uses:

- Trails and trail support facilities (except in buffer area)
- Wildlife & habitat management
- Research, interpretation & education of the resources

B. Entrance Zone

The vehicular entrance zone for this parcel should remain at the location of the existing entrance road into the property from Rt. 50, Arlington Boulevard. The zone should include the entrance road into the parcel and any parking areas, both existing and proposed.

Potential Uses:

- Road & road improvements
- Trails
- Utilities

C. Recreation Zone

The remaining area of the park will be designated a Recreation Zone. The primary purpose of this zone is to provide visitors with active and passive recreational experiences.

Potential Uses:

- Active & passive recreation
- Required site development facilities (such as screening & barriers)
- Utilities & storm water management

V. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (see map on page 16)

A. Introduction

The Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) for Towers Park describes recommendations for future park development. The CDP contains descriptions of the concept plan elements, design concerns and plans (maps) that show the general locations of recommended projects.

B. Description of the Upgrades to Existing Plan Elements

1. Overlay Diamond/Rectangular Field

The existing field at the park is a 200' diamond field that does not conform to the minimum standards for such a field. It also



contains a rectangular overlay field that is used by the local Fairfax Police Youth Association for

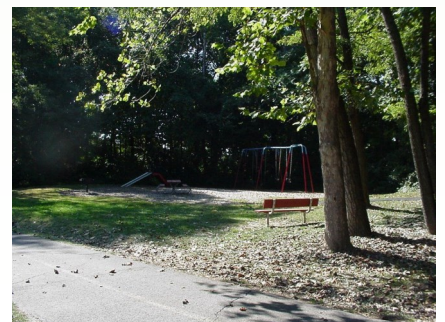
youth soccer. This field is heavily used and is reserved every weekend during softball and soccer season. It is the recommendation of the project team to bring the diamond field up to a level 1 field status with the addition of irrigation and lights. The field dimensions should be brought into conformance by extending the outfield into the existing trees adjacent to the parking lot. Minimal clearing is anticipated, as the outfield is short by 5-10' in most areas. Concrete pads under covered team dugouts and spectator bleachers are recommended. A fence along the perimeter of the outfield is also proposed to allay the complaints of balls rolling into the woods during games play.

2. Playground/Totlot Area

The existing playground at the park is minimal at best and should be expanded to provide for 2 distinct play groups, one for children ages 2 - 5 and a second group of children ages 5 - 12. Play events that allow for social interaction, role playing and cognitive achievement, to name a few, should be included. Permanent resilient surfacing should be installed to provide for safety and accessibility of the area. Benches and picnic tables should also be included.

3. Parking Area

The existing 28 space parking lot is in declining condition and should be milled and resurfaced.



Staff recommends adding a minimum of 8 additional parking spaces by extending the parking lot into adjacent overgrown scrub areas. Pedestrian access within the park would be improved by connecting the parking area to the Regional Trail.

C. Design Concerns:

1. Parking Area

A retaining wall should be considered along the northern edge of the parking lot where the diamond field would be expanded. A chain link fence should

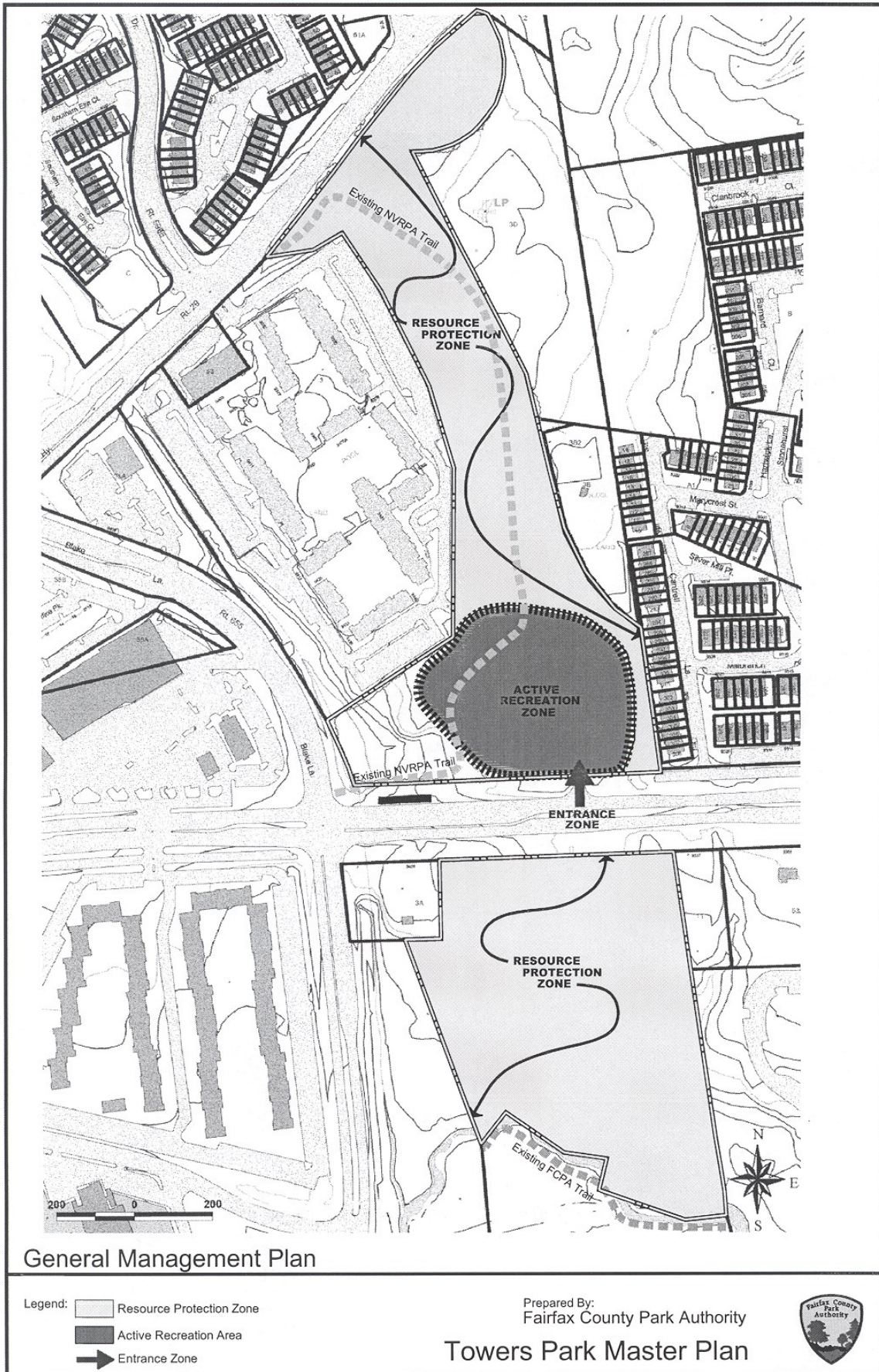


also be considered on top of the retaining wall to keep balls from rolling into the parking lot.

2. Athletic Field Lighting Glare Control

Utilize state-of-the-art total light control reflector design to reduce spill and glare by up to 95%. This solution allows lighted facilities to operate without disruption to adjacent neighborhoods.

TOWERS PARK GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN & CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



TOWERS PARK GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN & CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

