

McIntire Park Master Plan Final Report and Request for Funding Authorization
Submitted by the McIntire Park Master Planning Committee

August 5, 2004

The McIntire Park Master Plan Committee was appointed by Charlottesville's City Council in 2001 (see appendix A for 2003-2004 member list) to develop a draft master plan for McIntire Park. The Committee has met monthly for three years and worked through several iterations of the plan. The Committee is pleased to present to Council the attached final draft of the McIntire Park Master Plan. Attachment B contains a narrative description of park master plan elements and Attachment C contains a map of the plan. The committee has now completed its work of developing the draft master plan. Council can decide to request additional work from the committee, to hold a public hearing on the current version or to engage in another effort to complete the plan. Once a master plan has been approved, it is recommended that an 'implementation committee' be formed to oversee implementation and to make recommendations related to specific design elements and costs.

This report details the final draft for the master plan elements. These elements were voted on and formally adopted at a committee meeting in August 2003. The new McIntire Park Master Plan provides for multiple uses including walking, biking, water sports, nature enjoyment and education and food concessions (see Appendix B). Several aspects of the plan are important to note. First, additional staff would be required to fulfill uses for some of the elements. The Meadow Creek Parkway will remove 2-3 holes of golf in its present design. The final plan recommends that golf at McIntire Park be phased out and replaced by a new golf course planned for Pen Park. The design team has developed a list of additional entrances of various scales that also can be developed. These entrances will need further review by the master plan implementation committee to study costs, feasibility, safety and likelihood of use by residents.

It is important to understand that the lack of decision on the Meadow Creek Parkway has complicated the park planning process. However, while the parkway is incorporated into the plan, all of the plan's elements can be constructed with or without the parkway. Since the public is anxious to see progress and is ready to enjoy the promise of a revamped park that is accessible for many different users, the committee has recommended several items within the plan that can go forward to the design stage and be built now. These initial elements are requested to be authorized for design by Council and do not require additional staff, make use of already allocated funds and do not impact the golf course. The trails and golf uses can co-exist with a timeshare agreement. Several golfers were amendable to this idea during the public comment process, but this option will require staff to monitor times of use to ensure public safety as walking trails and golf use can not be done in tandem.

To gauge the public's interest and support for these initial items, the committee developed and distributed a plan ballot (see Attachment E). The ballot was distributed at the Dogwood Festival, two city libraries, the Park's Department office lobby, various events, the neighborhood CIP meeting, a public meeting in Council Chambers, posted to the city web site and distributed by members of the committee. This ballot did not ask the public to vote on all plan elements, only those for which immediate design and construction are requested. The ballot results helped to inform the committee's decision on which items to request for initial design and building. The committee met twice to consider public input and voted on July 14 (see table on page two) for allocation of existing funds for specific park plan elements. **Current funds in the existing account are \$1,050,000. There is \$1,000,000 proposed for projects with the balance remaining allocated to design work of the final elements and additional costs that final designs may require.**

Items Requested for Authorization of Funds	Rational	Estimated Budget
New entrance and landscaping at Melbourne Road and children's' water recreation feature	This will open up an area of the park that is presently inaccessible and allow access to new uses as well as attractive entrance features.	\$900,000
Trail system for the Northwestern section of the park along Route 250 (various designs from wheelchair accessible to rugged trails, will seek to complete entire trail system as budget allows)	Northwestern portion trails can be built now and then trails can be expanded across the golf course in the future with time sharing for golfing versus trail use.	\$100,000
Begin request of CSX Railroad Bridge easement to obtain permission to cross tracks	May take several years to obtain easement to have bridge crossing tracks to join the western & eastern portions of the park	\$0
	Combined Items Total	\$1,000,000

Attachment A: McIntire Park Planning Committee Members

Karen Firehock, Chair, McIntire Park Planning Committee and
Charlottesville Planning Commissioner

Alexandra Searls, Citizen

Eldon Wood, Charlottesville Planning Commission

Greg Jackson, Chair, City Parks Advisory Board

Maurice Cox, former Mayor of Charlottesville

Mike Svetz, Director, Charlottesville Parks and Recreation

Pat Plocek, Charlottesville Parks and Recreation

Rob Schilling, Charlottesville City Council

Robert Winstead, VMDO Architects

Project Consultants:

Will Rieley, Principal, Rieley and Associates

Roxanne Brouse, Rieley and Associates

Attachment B: Narrative Description of Park Plan

Paul Goodloe McIntire donated the land for McIntire Park to the City of Charlottesville in 1926. The park has evolved since then to include picnic shelters, softball fields and Little League baseball fields in the western section; and a golf course, wading pool, and playground in the eastern section. The Park also includes gently rolling terrain, streams, magnificent old trees, and an impressive view of the nearby mountains. Because of the park's central location and intensive sports use, it is the city's most intensively visited park.

The proposed Final Master Plan presupposes the relocation of the existing golf course to Penn Park. The new facility would be designed to accommodate those golfers that currently use McIntire Park. The proposed Interim Plan reflects those features of the park that could be constructed before the Meadowcreek Parkway and while the golf course is still in use. These include:

Entrance at Melbourne Road

Creating park facilities along Melbourne solves two critical problems: First, it creates new access into the park from the north by connecting to existing trails of the Rivanna Trails Foundation and the sidewalk that runs along Melbourne Road to the Charlottesville High School. Second, it allows for the relocation and/or transformation of the existing wading pool, which, in its current location along the 250 Bypass, is difficult to access. The pool also needs extensive repairs so investing in its relocation and/or a new water play feature makes sense at this time.

The added advantage of siting park amenities along Melbourne is that this area will also then serve as a neighborhood park for area residents. In addition to a new water play feature, the plan includes a new playground and picnic shelter. Also shown is a plaza fountain at the level of Melbourne road that leads visitors into the park and to a recreational pond with an adjacent restaurant and/or concession. The creation of a tree-lined boulevard along Melbourne enhances the park entrance and serves to link the park and the greenspace to the north.

Perimeter Trail Around the Golf Course

During the interim phase, in order to share this part of the park with non-golfers, a perimeter trail was designed. This shared use, however, would necessitate that the park be closed to golf during hours designated for trail use. It is not recommended that the trails be used when golfers are on the course.

Bridge Over the Railroad Tracks to Connect the East and West Sides of the Park.

Connecting the east and west sides of the park is a priority. This can be accomplished with new access points from Melbourne Road. However, a connection at the southern end of the park is also critical. Thus, a bridge over the railroad tracks became one of the highest priorities.

Pedestrian Connection from McIntire Road

The construction plans for the Meadowcreek Parkway should include accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists at its intersection with the Bypass as a high priority. In the interim,

however, a connection could be made under the Bypass at its intersection with McIntire Road (formerly known as “McIntire *Park* Road.”) This would allow pedestrians and bicyclists to gain entrance to the park from Downtown and all parts south.

The Westernmost Area of the Park

In the area west of the existing ballfields, south of the CHS and north of the existing fire station, the plan includes a natural pond with wildflower meadows (reminiscent of the work done by the WPA in the 1930’s), and more rustic walking trails. In addition, at the request of the firemen, a fitness trail is proposed.

Additional Tree Planting

Golf course or not, the venerable trees in the southeast greenspace are nearing the end. Beginning a tree planting program now in this area will ensure a continued canopy of shade. A small investment now will reap great future rewards.

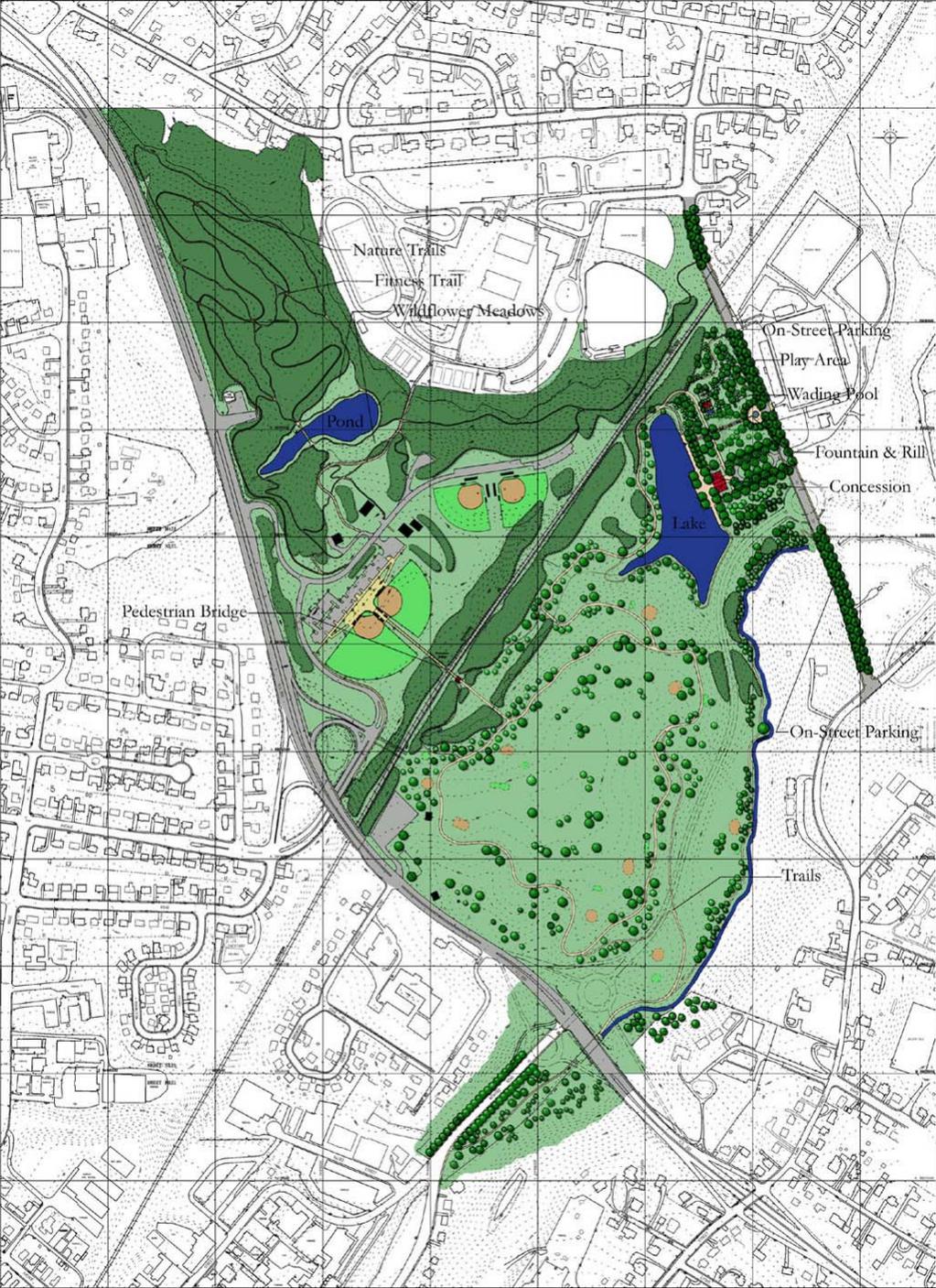
The proposed Final Master Plan, in addition to the facilities already discussed, illustrates the landscape park that would be in place once the golf course is re-established at Pen Park. The park would include a conservatory available for community and private events, as well as test gardens for environmental education. In addition, more trails would provide access to Schenks’ Branch (via a bridge over the Meadowcreek Parkway), and a circular arbor on the park’s most prominent knoll with its panoramic view. The central idea behind the landscape park is that it would be an unprogrammed open space where visitors could enjoy flying a kite, throwing a frisbee, sunbathing, picnicking, reading, or just doing nothing.

Finally, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is shown in a new location on the Final Master Plan because, should an interchange be built for the Meadowcreek Parkway, the Memorial would need to be moved. The plan proposes a new setting, still highly visible from the Bypass, that would incorporate elements of the existing memorial, perhaps even the original dogwoods.

An overriding goal of the Committee was to avoid creating parking areas in the park but provide for pedestrian access from many directions. Towards that end, a drawing was developed to illustrate the possibilities. Those access points most easily done at this time include: 1) Pedestrian entrances on Melbourne Road that, with the addition of pedestrian bridges over the creek that flows to Schenks’ Branch, could provide access to the southeast greenspace; and 2) Trailheads at the entrance to Charlottesville High School and at the westernmost part of the park where a connection could be made to the sidewalk along the 250 Bypass. In addition to the bridge over the railroad tracks and an entrance to the park from McIntire Road, critical future accommodation for pedestrians and bicyclists could include a bridge over the Meadowcreek Parkway, pedestrian access through the interchange and/or intersection of the Meadowcreek Parkway and the Bypass, and a physical connection to Greenleaf Park across the Bypass via tunnel or bridge.

Attachment C: Park Map

INTERIM MAP (with golf course)



FINAL MAP (after course constructed at Pen Park and Meadowcreek Parkway in place)



Attachment D: Ballot Results and Comments

MCINTIRE PARK FINAL BALLOTING RESULTS

AMENITY	Votes Not Prioritized	1 st Priority	2 nd Priority	3 rd Priority	4 th Priority	5 th Priority	TOTAL VOTES
Ped. Bridge over RR tracks	11	50	44	27	6	7	145
New Entrance at Melbourne Rd.	5	34	29	30	8	12	118
Walking Trails	12	54	39	35	3	4	147
Rec Pond and Food	10	29	29	41	10	10	129
Wading Pool, Restrooms, shelter, etc.	10	38	38	30	9	5	130

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED

Better Access from McIntire Road/Bypass - 5
 Bring on the Parkway - 3
 Opposed to the Parkway - 5
 Keep and/or improve the Golf Course – add driving range - 101 + 691 signatures on petitions
 Herb Garden
 Wild Meadows, Grasses, more trees, bird nesting boxes, Wild-life ponds
 More Dog Priority Areas - 3
 Thanks for your Hard Work
 Maintain Wild Life habitat near Melbourne
 Let’s get this going so schools can use it
 Like Arborteum idea -2
 Tennis Courts
 No Bridge
 No Conservatory
 Mountain Biking Areas – not hard surface - 2
 Connect to Greenleaf Park
 Expansion of Little League facilities – No Carnival – 3
 Circuit or perimeter trail – 2
 Frisbee Golf -2

286 Ballots,, E-mails and Faxes received from April 22-June 1st, 2004