

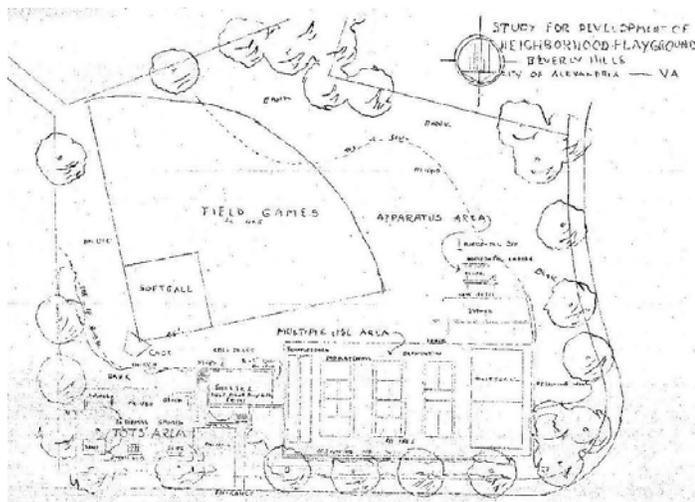
Beverley Park

History and Character

Beverley Park, also known as “the Pit,” is a 1.7 acre park in the Beverly Hills neighborhood.

The 1944 Long-term Recreation Plan for the City of Alexandria described the Park as:

“An undeveloped city opened property in Beverley Hills, known as the “gravel” pit of approximately 1.75 acres, is the only available property within this neighborhood for active recreation. The development of this property involves considerable engineering if the maximum use of the property is to be realized. Unfortunately, there is considerable differences in elevation which will involve a large amount grading. The area is further handicapped by its size but it is felt that in spite of these conditions steps should be taken to develop it for playground purposes...”



1944, National Recreation Association, Alexandria Long-Term Recreation Plan

The plan called for a softball field, court area, tot area, and apparatus area, as shown in the image below. The park has only changed slightly since then and its current features and configuration has largely remained the same since the 1970’s.

The Park is known as a community gathering space, where families and friends meet throughout the day. It also hosts the North Ridge Neighborhood Association’s Christmas Tree Lighting, Beautification Program, and other activities. The hard top area (formally the basketball court) is known as a place for children to find and play toys left behind by other park users.

While a popular site, the park still suffers from many of the conditions cited in the 1940’s park plan. The retaining walls along the park are deteriorating, the slopes are eroding and the site is not ADA accessible. The playground structures are also over twenty years old and at the end of their useful life.

Current Project

While Beverley Park is considered a neighborhood park, it was not included in the overall Neighborhood Park Improvement Planning process because the City had already allocated funds to renovate the Park by the time the Neighborhood Park Improvement Plans began in 2014. The early allocation of funding was largely needed to address serious erosion concerns along the park’s south and west sides.

The project goals include:

- Preserve existing trees;
- Repair and reinforce existing retaining walls in order to preserve trees;
- Relocate ADA entrance;
- Retain existing court and add path;
- Add reforestation areas and nature play elements; and
- Reduce erosion by limiting foot traffic on the slope and re-establishing vegetation



Timeline of Project, to-date

January 2014:	Completed slope study
April-November 2014:	Developed park renovation strategy and obtained community feedback
January –April 2015:	Developed project cost estimates and obtained CIP funding (\$900,000)
May-June 2015:	Completed 30% Engineering Plan review
July-November 2015:	Re-evaluated design due to extensive site impacts, constructability concerns and cost increases
November 2015:	Release modified Renovation Plan

Project Schedule

Fall 2015 - Winter 2016	Complete engineering plans and obtain plan approvals
February - June 2016	Solicit and award construction contract
August - December 2016	Anticipated site construction

Existing Conditions



Community Feedback

While not part of the overall planning process, staff did conduct a similar community feedback survey specific to Beverley Park and held community meetings. The results of the survey are shown below. Staff also held meetings with the North Ridge Citizens Association and conducted on-site workshops.

Approximately how far away do you live from the Park?

Value	Count	Percent
Less than 1/8 mile (less than a five minute walk)	38	50.7%
About 1/2 mile (about a 10-15 minute walk)	17	22.7%
More than 1 Mile	12	16.0%
About 1 mile (about a 20-25 minute walk)	8	10.7%

On average during which times of the day/week, do you or members of your household visit the Park. Select all that apply.

Value	Count	Percent
Weekends	44	58.7%
Weekdays	37	49.3%
After 5 pm	32	42.7%
11 am - 1pm	32	42.7%
8 - 10 am	31	41.3%
2 - 4 pm	29	38.7%

What activities do you do in the Park?

Value	Count	Percent
Use the Playground	59	78.7%
Use the Multi-Purpose Hard Court	43	57.3%
Use the Open Turf Area	36	48.0%
Relax	28	37.3%
Picnic	26	34.7%
Visit Natural Areas	23	30.7%
Walk	21	28.0%
Participate in Park/Garden Cleanups	15	20.0%
Attend Events	15	20.0%
Walk Dog(s)	13	17.3%
Other	11	14.7%

When children in your household visit the Playground what is their favorite activity?

Value	Count	Percent
Playing on play equipment	20	30.8%
Unstructured play - running, games, group play	14	21.5%
Play with loose toys brought to Park	19	29.2%
Other	12	18.5%

From the list below, please rank the types of play equipment you would like to see in the new Playground, with 10 being the most desirable, and 1 being the least desirable.

Item	Score	Overall Ra
Swings	437	1
Slides	369	2
Climbing ladders/walls/nets	362	3
Playhouses or other "make-believe" elements	359	4
Crawl tunnels/tubes	281	5
Monkey bars/trapeze rings	280	6

Rotating or spinning equipment	257	7
Stepping pods/"stones"	246	8
Rockers or see-saws	223	9
Activities with moveable parts, games, puzzles	161	10

Which general style of equipment do you think is most appropriate for the new Playground?

Value	Count	Percent
Traditional (similar to existing, with many platforms)	31	44.9%
Abstract/Modern (typically less platforms)	5	7.3%
Natural (boulders, logs, earth forms—nature inspired)	33	47.8%

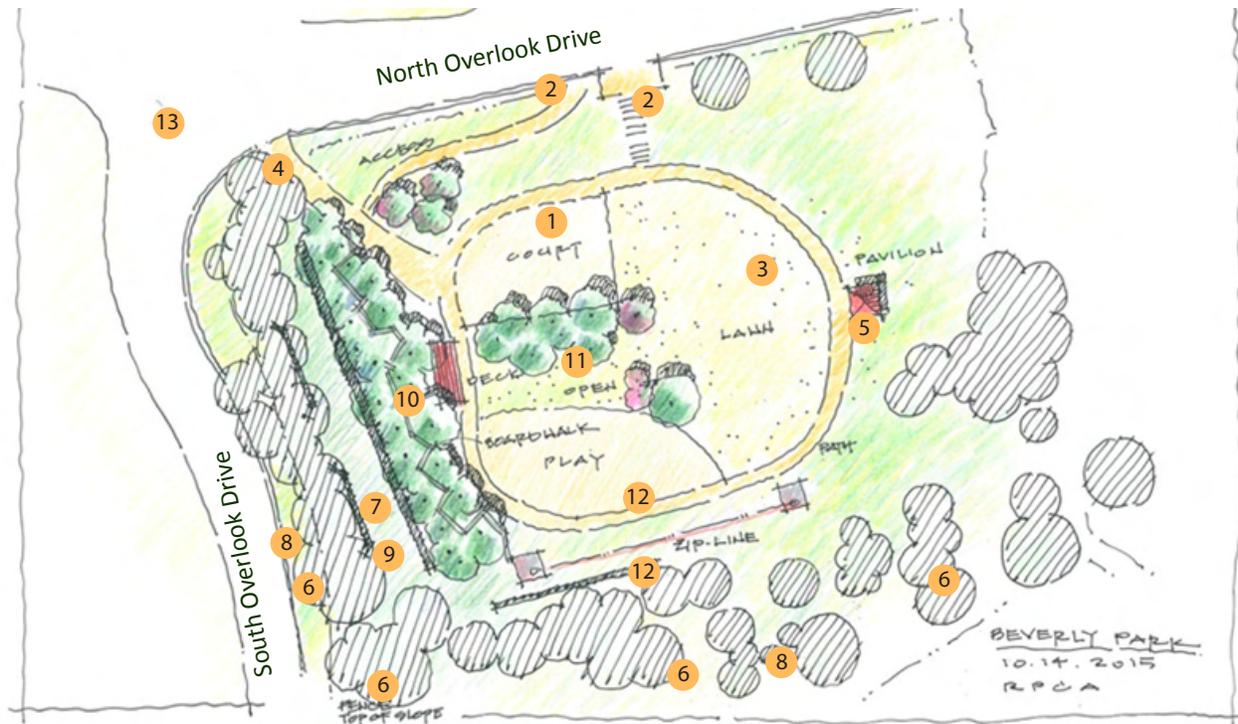
What do you think needs improvement in the Park? Select all that apply.

Value	Count	Percent
Park Furnishings (such as benches, picnic tables)	41	54.7%
Playground	32	42.7%
Picnic Area	24	32.0%
Open Turf Area	21	28.0%
Natural Areas	20	26.7%
Other	20	26.7%
Passive Use Areas	11	14.7%
Trails	10	13.3%
ADA Accessibility	9	12.0%
Park Entrances	8	10.7%
Parking	5	6.7%
Security	3	4.0%
Signage	0	0.0%

What do you think needs improvement in the Playground? Select all that apply.

Value	Count	Percent
Variety of play equipment	26	41.9%
Other	24	38.7%
Seating	21	33.9%
Protection from weather	17	27.4%
Amount of play equipment	13	21.0%
Safety Surfacing in the playground	11	17.7%
Age Appropriateness of play equipment	10	16.1%
Fencing	8	12.9%
Activities suitable for children with disabilities	7	11.3%
Safety of play equipment	6	9.7%
Signage	2	3.2%

Concept Plan as of November 9, 2015



- 1 **Preserve existing hard court.** Formerly a basketball court, the existing asphalt court is now a well-used area for unstructured play. The new park layout will slightly reduce the length and width of the court by approximately 10 feet.
- 2 **Add accessible park entrance and pathway connecting pavilion, playground and hard court.** The site currently does not comply with ADA. A loop pathway will connect the pavilion, playground and hard court. The accessible ramp will be located near the existing wood steps. To build the new ramp, the existing hedges on North Overlook will be removed or pruned back as needed.
- 3 **Improve open lawn areas and drainage.** Open lawn areas will be situated on the eastern portion of the site. The area will be re-graded and the existing storm drains will be upgraded to improve drainage. The lawn area can accommodate youth sports practices, up to ages 8.
- 4 **Enhance existing maintenance driveway.** The driveway located at the corner of North and South Overlook Drive is not very welcoming. This area will be enhanced with low plantings. The driveway will also be re-graded to be less steep for maintenance vehicles.
- 5 **Replace and relocate pavilion.** The existing pavilion is often used for birthday parties. The current structure does not comply with code and the dirt floor is often inundated with water from rain events. The new pavilion will be located away from drainage areas and have a hard floor surface.
- 6 **Preserve identified native trees on slopes.** The existing trees are a valuable natural resource for wildlife and include several native oaks and hickories. The trees are also providing shade and are helping to stabilize the slope. During construction, extensive tree preservation measures will be implemented.
- 7 **Remove retaining walls on the south slope and repair retaining walls on the west slope.** The older walls on the south slope have deteriorated past their useful life and will be removed. Based on topography, replacement walls are not necessary. The walls on the upper west slope are in good condition and will be reinforced with additional support pilings. The lower walls are leaning profusely and rebuilding the wall in the same footprint would impact trees. Based on structural evaluations, a new wall can be built in front of the existing wall, without having to remove the existing wall, or impact vegetation.
- 8 **Reduce soil erosion on the slopes.** The existing slopes are prone to frequent washouts. Planting native groundcovers and grasses will help establish vegetative cover. Temporary silt fence and other erosion control practices will also help reduce siltation and slow runoff. Because foot traffic on the slope contributes to soil compaction and disturbs vegetation establishment, a permanent fence will be installed to stop access to the slope. To ensure long term erosion control, a maintenance follow up plan will be developed.
- 9 **Establish a reforestation area on the west side of the park adjacent to retaining walls.** By planting sapling trees at the base of the slopes, these will over time, replace trees on the slope that decline naturally.
- 10 **Add nature play features through the new reforestation area.** The existing slope is well used by children for play, however, the use contributes to slope erosion. New nature play elements, such as a plank boardwalk through the reforestation area, will provide opportunities for exploration and unstructured play. A low multi-purpose deck can be used as a stage for events, or imaginative play.
- 11 **Create areas for congregation with picnic tables and site furnishings.** The area between the court and playground will have moveable site furnishings and picnic tables. This area is the center of the park, and will provide a social gathering space, while also providing surveillance within the park for caregivers and parents. Benches will also be located along the loop path.
- 12 **Renovate playground areas.** Most of the play equipment is over twenty years old and will be updated with new structures for multiple age groups. The structures will have slides, climbing nets and other elements. Other equipment include more swings, a zipline, and shade sails. Both rubber and wood fiber, safety surfacing will be used.
- 13 **Install low cost alternatives for traffic calming.** The intersection of North and South Overlook Drive is very wide and vehicles are prone to drive over the speed limit. Low cost alternatives such as line striping, color coating, and reflective bollards, may help to visually narrow the intersection and slow vehicles. Crosswalk striping will also help drivers become more aware of children and pedestrians.