

Fort Ward Park
Playground Accessibility Concept Study

Virtual Meeting Agenda
February 22, 2023
7:00 p.m.

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Presentation**
 - Playground Background and Process (Judy Lo)
 - Playground Concept Study, Sites B and D (Judy Lo, Garrett Fesler, Cara Smith)
- 3. Questions and Comments**

[0]

Welcome

Good Evening. Welcome and thank you for joining us tonight. My name is Judy Lo, I am the project manager for the Fort Ward Park Playground Accessibility project.

The focus of tonight's agenda is a presentation on the Fort Ward Playground Concept Study, which has been posted on the Fort Ward Management Plan webpage as of February 18. Presenters include myself, Garrett Fesler, an Archaeologist with the Office of Historic Alexandria, and Cara Smith, a Landscape Architect with the firm Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects.

Also joining as panelists are tonight are staff from the Office of Historic Alexandria: Susan Cumbey, Eleanor Breen, Gretchen Bulova and Recreation Parks and Cultural Activities staff: Jack Browand, James Spengler, Beth Znidersic, and Rod Simmons.

After the presentation, we will have time for questions and comments. You may speak, or submit comments in the chat.



Fort Ward Park Playground Accessibility

Concept Study to Relocate the Playground

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Office of Historic Alexandria
Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.

February 17, 2023

Purpose and Objectives

- To recognize and respect Fort Ward resources, especially sensitive cultural resources which have significant value to the Fort Community descendants
- To evaluate relocation of the playground to Site B (near the existing playground) and Site D (near the amphitheater); and its potential impacts to cultural resources and natural resources; and to evaluate potential mitigation measures
- To engage the community including the Fort Community descendants, in determining a new playground location



[2]

- While the purpose of this study is to find a new playground location, we must recognize and respect Fort Ward resources, especially sensitive cultural resources which have significant value to the Fort Community descendants.
- The study will evaluate relocation of the playground to Site B (near the existing playground) and Site D (near the amphitheater); its potential impacts to cultural resources and natural resources; and potential mitigation measures.
- The aim is to engage community stakeholders, including the Fort Community descendants, in determining a new playground location.

Community Engagement



2022

- **January 22, 2022:** Community Meeting #1 Fort Ward Projects (virtual)
- **May 21, 2022:** Playground Community Meeting #2/Site Walk
- **June 22, 2022:** Playground Community Meeting #3 (virtual)

2023

- **February 22, 2023:** Playground Community Meeting #4 (virtual)
- **March 4 and 11, 2023:** Playground Community Open Houses
- **February 17 - March 31, 2023:** Community Comment
- **April/May, 2023:** Playground Community Meeting #5 (virtual); Determine final playground location
- **June/July 2023:** Begin design development and permitting process for selected location

[3]

- The study has been approached in two parts. In 2022, staff identified five potential options for playground accessibility. Engagement included site walks and virtual meetings. Community feedback narrowed the choices to Site B and Site D
- In 2023, engagement will be focused on these two sites. Tonight's virtual meeting starts this process.
- The meeting recording and slide transcript will be posted on the City's Fort Ward Management Plan webpage the following day.
- Community Open Houses are scheduled for March 4 and 11
- Community comments and questions will be gathered throughout March.

- A 5th community meeting will be held later this spring to determine the final playground location,
- In summer 2023, design development and permitting for the selected location are anticipated to commence.

2015 Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan



Planning and Implementation Goals for Park Enhancements

- Protect cultural resource areas
- Protect natural resources
- Limit ground disturbance
- Meet ADA requirements
- Coordinate and collaborate with archaeology during all project phases
- Community engagement

[4]

- The Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan is the guiding document for the long-term management of Fort Ward. It lays out a strategic framework of goals, best practices, and recommendations, to ensure the park's historic and cultural resources, natural environment, and recreational amenities are managed sensitively and are preserved for future generations.
- All work in the park aims to protect cultural resources, natural resources, limit unnecessary ground disturbance, meet ADA requirements, and requires coordination with Alexandria Archaeology during all phases of a project, from planning, design

to construction.

- Community engagement is an essential part of plan implementation ensuring the community is informed and engaged, particularly for work occurring in sensitive areas.

Fort Ward Park Accessibility Improvements

- Management Plan Strategy 1.3.2: Enhance Park accessibility and meet ADA requirements
- Comply with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates and 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- Resolve complaints received by the Office of Human Rights
- Prioritize park facilities that do not meet requirements:
 - Vehicular parking areas
 - Picnic shelter
 - Playground
- The 2015 Management Plan originally recommended moving the playground to the west side of the park



[5]

- The management plan recommends enhancing park accessibility and meeting requirements of the American with Disabilities Act.
- Currently vehicular parking areas, the picnic shelter area, and playground, do not meet ADA. These projects are currently in various stages of project planning, design and construction.
- The plan originally recommended moving the playground to the west side of the park.

January 2022 Community Meeting Playground Community Feedback



- Concerns about burials and impacts to cultural resources
- What options have been looked at previously?
- Have other areas of the park have been considered?
- What are other planned/future projects at Fort Ward?

[6]

- At the January 2022 community meeting, feedback signaled a need for a comprehensive evaluation of playground accessibility.
- Stakeholders raised concerns about burials and impacts to cultural resources, and asked:
- What options have been looked at previously?
- Have other areas of the park have been considered?
- What are other future projects at Fort Ward?

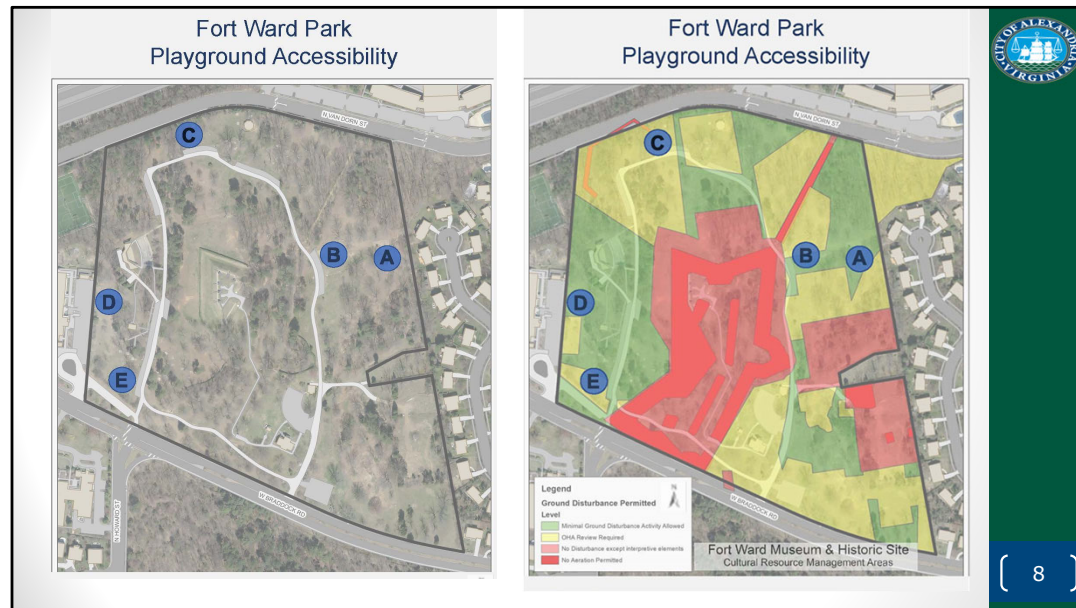


Playground Site Assessment Criteria

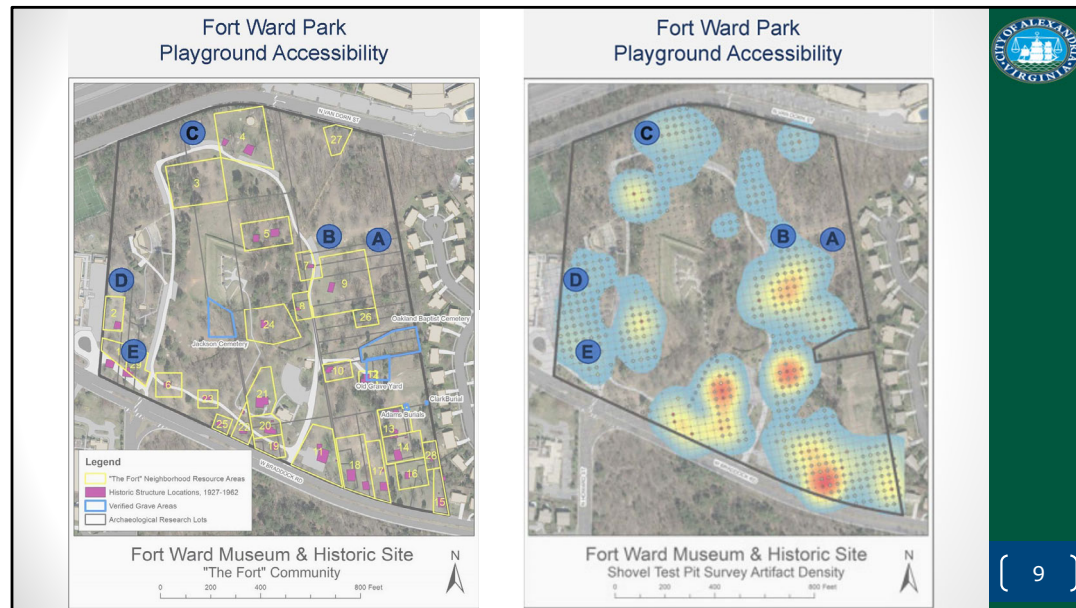
- Cultural Resources—Civil War
- Cultural Resources—African American Fort Community
- Natural Resources
- Existing Topography
- Existing Stormwater/Drainage
- Accessible Route
- Accessible Parking
- Grading
- Constructability
- Playground considerations
- Other amenities/uses

[7]

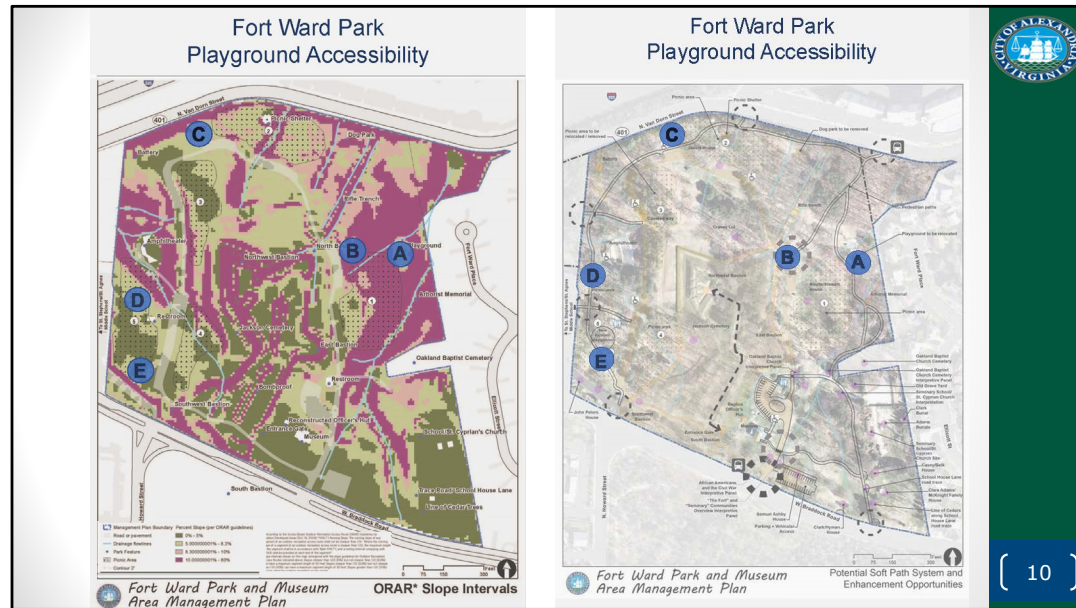
Last spring staff proceeded to evaluate playground accessibility according to more than ten criteria, including: cultural resources, natural resources, topography, drainage, accessible routes, accessible parking, grading, constructability, playground programming and other considerations such as amenities and compatibility with adjacent uses.



- Using the plate maps from the Management Plan, options were evaluated.
- As seen in the aerial map on the left, Fort Ward has substantial tree cover and many open areas throughout its 43 acres
- However, many of the open areas have sensitive cultural resources. These areas are shown in the ground disturbance protocol map on the right side. Red and yellow colors indicate sensitive areas where disturbance is either not allowed or requires further review by the Office of Historic Alexandria.



- The map on the left shows the extent of the Fort Community, and the structures associated with this African American community. The light blue areas designate verified grave areas, located on the east and central portions of the park.
- The map on the right shows the concentration of artifacts uncovered from hundreds of shovel test pits completed since 2009. The red and yellow areas show where most artifacts were found.



- The map on the left shows the park’s steep terrain in the dark red color. The light green colors represent more flat terrain.
- The map on the right shows future areas that will be developed to interpret the ‘Fort community’, through a network of trails and interpretive features.



Fort Ward Park
Playground Accessibility

Playground Accessibility Options

- **Site A:** Retain playground in current location and provide accessible pathway
- **Site B:** Relocate playground near the existing playground at the top of the hill (also studied in 2008/2009)
- **Site C:** Relocate playground to area west of the picnic shelter
- **Site D:** Relocate playground to area south of the amphitheater
- **Site E:** Relocate playground south of picnic area 5 (studied in 2020)



[11]

- Generally, the areas inside the loop road, and the areas along West Braddock Road were not considered. The options include:
- Site A: Retain the playground in current location and provide an accessible pathway;
- Site B: Relocate the playground near the existing playground at the top of the hill, which was also studied in 2008;
- Site C: Relocate playground to the area west of the picnic shelter;
- Site D: Relocate playground to the area south of the amphitheater;
- Site E: Relocate playground to the areas south of picnic area 5,

which was also studied in 2020.

Playground Site Assessment Matrix




Fort Ward Park Playground Accessibility
Site Assessment Matrix
5/21/2022

	Site A: Retain playground in current location, provide accessible path.	Site B: Relocate playground to top of hill	Site C: Relocate playground to area west of picnic shelter	Site D: Relocate playground to area south of area 5 picnic area	Site E: Relocate playground to area south of area 5 picnic area
Cultural Resources-Civil War Resources	Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicates that the potential for significant Civil War cultural resources at this location is low.	The site trench is within proximity. The playground will be visible from the loop road. A formal metal detecting survey of this area and archaeological survey testing and historical research indicates that the potential for significant Civil War cultural resources at this location is low.	This location is in proximity to the far east perimeter of a Civil War battery. The site is in the sound path of occasional historical artillery programs. The site trench is within proximity. The playground will be visible from the loop road. A formal metal detecting survey of this area, archaeological survey testing, and historical research indicates that the potential for significant Civil War cultural resources at this location is low.	Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicates that the potential for significant Civil War cultural resources at this location is low. The location is visible from the loop road.	Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicates that the potential for significant Civil War cultural resources at this location is low. The location is visible from the loop road.
Cultural Resources-African American Fort Community	Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicates that the potential for significant cultural resources related to The Fort community at this location is low.	Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicate that the potential for significant cultural resources related to The Fort community at this location is low.	This site is within a parcel owned by the Jarvis family between 1921 and 1946. The location of the Jarvis homestead was located approximately 100 ft. to the east.	This location is within the bounds of land owned by the James Jackson family from 1894-1913, and within a lot owned by the John Pickett family from 1913 to 1950, and the Frank Lewis family from 1922-1935. The footprints of the Pickett and Lewis homesteads no longer exist, having been destroyed by the bus loop road for the adjacent school in the 1950s.	This location is within the bounds of land owned by the James Jackson family from 1894-1913, and within a lot owned by the John Pickett family from 1913 to 1950, and the Frank Lewis family from 1922-1935. The footprints of the Pickett and Lewis homesteads no longer exist, having been destroyed by the bus loop road for the adjacent school in the 1950s.
Natural Resources	Mature trees surround the current playground site. Species include Red Oak, White Oak, Hickory, maple, persimmon, service berry, dogwood.	The top of hill has species trees that include a white oak, dogwood, black cherry, and hickory.	The grove of trees located to the west contains black gum, hickory, red oak, chestnut oak, and persimmon. Vegetation lines the north side of the path along Van Don Street.	A grove of trees is located to the east containing pine, white oak, white oak, persimmon, and black cherry trees. Two locust grove trees are located in the middle of the grass area. Several black cherry trees are located to the west and north.	A 20" cal. yellow oak tree is located to the east. Shrubs line the south side. Tree grove located north of area.
Existing Topography	Existing slopes are greater than 10%. Some areas are steeper, 20% slope. Elevation change from the parking lot to playground is approximately 41-23 feet.	Existing slopes range from 10 to 14 %.	Existing slopes are approximately 7.5 - 9.0%.	Existing slopes range from 6.0 to 8.0 %.	Existing slopes range from 6.0 to 8.0 %.
Existing Stormwater/Drainage	A catchment area above the hill, north of the existing playground site. The 2.5 year old play equipment area conflicts with the water. Another major drainage way is located east of the playground.	The catchment area that runs down the hill should be avoided when siting the playground footprint.	There are no major drainage structures or swales in the vicinity.	There are no major drainage structures or swales in the vicinity.	There are no major drainage structures or swales in the vicinity.
Accessible Route (meat and exceed 0.33% in slope)	Requires significant grading to build a pathway that slopes between 1.0 - 0.3%. Grading will impact existing tree and drainage. Pathway could be 600-foot in length based on study in 2016.	Due to proximity to parking, a shorter accessible route would be needed.	Due to proximity to parking, a shorter accessible route would be needed.	Due to distance from parking, a longer accessible route would be needed. The route should connect to the restrooms.	Due to proximity to parking, a shorter accessible route would be needed.
Accessible Parking	Existing parking is available. Significant grading is required to provide an accessible route.	Existing parking is available. The slopes at the top of the hill are less steep than the middle of the hill. Low retaining walls can create a terrace for the playground.	Existing parking is available. The slopes in this area are generally flatter. Grading of 1-4 feet would be anticipated to create a more level area for the play area.	Existing parking is further away. Grading of 14 feet would be anticipated to create a more level area for the play area.	Existing parking is available. Grading would be anticipated to create a more level area for the play area. The grade would be raised 3-4 feet with fill soil.
Constructability	The existing parking lot may serve as staging area and construction entrance.	The existing parking lot may serve as staging area and construction entrance.	The existing parking lot may serve as staging area and construction entrance.	Construction access and staging would need to be considered due to the distance away from the loop road.	The existing parking lot may serve as staging area and construction entrance.
Playground Footprint/considerations	The 2.5 year old play equipment area should be removed or modified. The school age equipment receives good shade from the existing trees.	A new accessible playground could be built at the top of the hill, with a smaller footprint, while retaining a portion of the existing playground at the bottom of the hill.	The playground could incorporate nature play due to adjacency to the grove. Van Don Street is close by. There is fencing located along Van Don sidewalk. Adjacent catch grass area.	The playground is located further back from the loop road. The grove of trees may obstruct sightlines/visibility. Playground use may help to activate area.	in proximity to West Braddock Road. Adjacent grass area to the west.
Other Amenities	Picnic areas are located at the top of hill. Restrooms are not too far away.	Existing water is available. Several picnic areas are located here.	Existing water is available. The picnic shelter is in close proximity. Restrooms are further away compared to the other sites.	Restrooms, picnic areas and amphitheatre are in close proximity. St. Stephens/Dr. Agnes School is adjacent.	Close to St. Stephens/Dr. Agnes School. Water tapoff is available.

[12]

The five options were evaluated against almost a dozen criteria shown in the matrix.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation
May/June 2022 Community Feedback
Options NOT Preferred



Fort Ward Park
Playground Accessibility

- **Site A:** Building an accessible route would likely impact significant natural resources. Based on elevation change and topography, a route would likely exceed 600 feet in length. For comparison, the picnic shelter pathway is approximately 95 feet long.
- **Site C:** The proximity to Van Dorn Street, the distance from restrooms, the noise from Interstate 395, and potential impacts to vegetation, have made this location less desirable
- **Site E:** Relocating the playground south of picnic area 5 was studied in 2020. This location was not preferred because of its close proximity to the Peters and Lewis homes and potential impacts to those resources

[13]

- Community feedback from last spring indicated that options A, C, and E were not preferred.
- At Site A, building an accessible route would likely impact significant natural resources. Based on elevation change and topography, a route would likely exceed 600 feet in length. For comparison, the new picnic shelter path is approximately 95 feet long.
- At Site C, the proximity to Van Dorn Street, the distance from restrooms, the noise from Interstate 395, and potential impacts to vegetation, have made this location less desirable.
- At Site E, relocating the playground south of picnic area 5 was

studied in 2020. This location was not preferred because of close its proximity to the Peters and Lewis homes, and potential impacts to those resources.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation
May/June 2022 Community Feedback
Preferred Locations for Study

Fort Ward Park
Playground Accessibility

Site D: On the west side of the park, south of the amphitheater and north of the restrooms

Site B: Near the existing playground- upslope from the existing playground in the vicinity of the existing picnic pads

[14]


- The preferred options from last spring were Site D: On the west side of the park, south of the amphitheater and north of the restrooms and
- Site B: On the east side of the park, upslope from the existing playground in the vicinity of the existing picnic pads
- The two options have been studied for further evaluation and community feedback

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Conceptual Study for Playground Site B and Site D

Scope of Work

- ❖ Preliminary Archaeology Assessment
- ❖ Options for Tree Preservation and Stormwater Water Management
- ❖ Test footprints for typical playground area. Assumes playground will have play equipment, site furnishings, an accessible route, trees for shade, and potential opportunities for natural play
- ❖ Evaluate siting for accessibility, impacts, constructability, and other considerations
- ❖ Perspectives and cross sections to visualize the playground in place

Study excludes geo-technical analysis and engineering design



[15]

- The next part of this presentation focuses on the scope of study for Site B and Site D. The scope includes:
- A Preliminary Archaeology Assessment;
- Options for Tree Preservation and Stormwater Water Management;
- Test footprints for a typical playground area. This allows us to see the potential size and extents of the playground. The test fit assumes the playground will have play equipment, site furnishings, an accessible route, trees for shade, and potential opportunities for natural play;

- The scope also includes evaluation for accessibility, impacts, constructability, and other considerations; and
- Development of perspectives and cross sections to visualize the playground in place;
- The study excludes geo-technical analysis and engineering design.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation - Site B, Near the Existing Playground
Summary of Preliminary Archaeological Assessment

The map shows an aerial view of a wooded area. A red rectangle outlines the 'Current Location' of a playground. A blue rectangle outlines 'Option B', which is a proposed playground area. Small purple circles represent shovel test pits, and small green circles represent metal detector hits. A scale bar at the bottom indicates 0, 37.5, 75, and 150 feet. A north arrow is also present.

Fort Ward Park - Option Area B
 STP Locations and Metal Detector Hits

Figure 5. Locations of shovel test pits (light purple circles) and metal detector hits (green circles) and around Option Area B.

- **Site B**
 - ❖ **Background:** Site B is part of a 5-acre parcel that passed through the hands of several owners—including the Craven family (1921-1926)—but was never developed.
 - ❖ **The findings for Site B:**
 - Background research indicates that there was no known activity at this site
 - Archaeological shovel testing turned up a low number of Indigenous, Civil War, or Fort Community artifacts
 - The lack of any evidence of activity is likely due to the steep slopes which made the landform poorly suited for most uses.
 - ❖ **Preliminary Recommendation:** If chosen, and depending on construction impacts, Alexandria Archaeology will develop an on-site Monitoring Plan for ground-disturbing activity at Site B

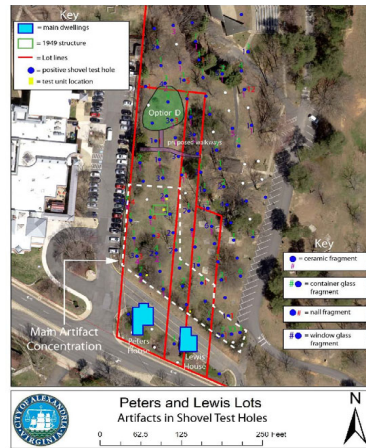
*Refer to Appendix for full assessment

[16]

- Site B is part of a 5-acre parcel that passed through the hands of several owners—including the Craven family (1921-1926)—but was never developed.
- A small portion of the proposed playground extends into a back edge of a parcel owned by the Shorts family beginning in the late 19th century.
- Background research indicates that there was no known activity at this site, and archaeological shovel testing generated a low number of artifacts, mostly park debris.
- Because of the steep slopes at this location, the landform does not appear to have been conducive to habitation or most uses.

- Much more detailed information about Site B can be found in the Preliminary Archaeological Assessment posted online.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation - Site D, Near the Amphitheater
Summary of Preliminary Archaeological Assessment



• **Site D**

❖ **Background:** Site D was part of an 11.5-acre parcel purchased by James F. Jackson in 1894. In 1913 the Jacksons sold John H. Peters 0.75 acres of land located in the southwest corner of their 11.5 acres. The Peters family held the lot until selling it to the City in 1960.

❖ **The findings for Site D:**

- Although located on the back of the Peters' lot, background research indicates that the Peters family did not actively use this portion of the property
- Archaeological shovel testing turned up a low number of Indigenous, Civil War, or Fort Community artifacts

❖ **Preliminary Recommendation:** If chosen, and depending on construction impacts, Alexandria Archaeology will develop an on-site Monitoring Plan for ground-disturbing activity at Site D

*Refer to Appendix for full assessment

- Site D was part of an 11.5-acre parcel purchased by James F. Jackson in 1894. In 1913 the Jacksons sold John H. Peters 0.75 acres of land. The Peters family developed the lot and eventually sold it to the City in 1960.
- Background research indicates that the Peters family did not actively use this portion of the property and archaeological shovel testing identified no significant artifact concentrations.
- A detailed account of the research and archaeological findings can be found in the Preliminary Archaeological Assessment posted online, which includes an explanation of the map that you see here on the slide.

- And finally, whether Site B or D is chosen, Alexandria Archaeology will assess the construction impacts, and from that develop an on-site Monitoring Plan for all ground-disturbing activity, similar to the monitoring that took place during construction of the new walking path at the nearby Picnic Shelter.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS Playground Relocation Cultural Resources Review Procedures



- Based on past archaeological and historical research, the park is divided into “cultural resource sensitivity areas” that identify both Civil War and Fort Community resources
- Alexandria Archaeology reviews all ground disturbing projects proposed for Fort Ward as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the park under Guidelines for Ground Disturbance Resources as outlined below:

The Review Steps for Cultural Resources:

1. Notify OHA a minimum of seven (7) days before work is to begin in **Yellow** Shaded and **Red** Shaded areas.
2. Courtesy notification preferred for work to take place in **Green** Shaded areas.
3. OHA will review the proposed work site and, when necessary, clearly work with RPCA and T&ES to mark off areas where ground disturbance may occur in accordance with the Management Plan.
4. All capital projects (i.e., planned site improvements) shall include funding and related resources for archaeology in the project timeline and budget. Regardless of location, all ground disturbers must be made aware of the **Call If Finds** requirement in Section IV—Responsibilities of Ground Disturbers, no matter how small the ground-disturbing activity.
5. There will be no disturbance to identified burial locations; all burials will be protected in place. If evidence of burials is discovered during any ground disturbing activities, OHA will immediately update the map showing levels of ground disturbance to ensure that the area of the burials is shaded red. The newly discovered burials will also be protected in place.



- There are a lot of words on this slide. The main point is that protection for cultural resources was built into the Fort Ward Management Plan that was adopted in 2015.
- The color-coded map shows the varying levels of sensitivity for cultural resources throughout the park. Note that both Area B and D are in Green shaded areas which technically require only a courtesy notification before work can begin.
- The City, however, has taken additional measures given the broader cultural sensitivity of Fort Ward, especially to descendants of The Fort Community. City archaeologists have completed a Preliminary Archaeological Assessment and will

review future construction plans to develop a monitoring plan - these are steps usually associated with yellow and red shaded areas.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation – Tree Preservation Options





Tree mats were used for equipment access during construction of the Fort Ward picnic shelter pathway.



Air spading may be used to loosen compacted soil, to expose tree roots, and to keep critical root systems intact. This application was used for construction of a sidewalk at Ewell Park.

Land disturbance can cause soil compaction and adversely affect tree root systems. A variety of tree preservation measures can be used together to protect existing trees from the impacts of construction. A tree preservation plan as required by the City's Landscape Guidelines will be developed when a final playground site is chosen.

- ❖ Use of tree mats to facilitate construction access through tree preservation areas
- ❖ Prune and elevate limbs to remove dead wood and to provide equipment clearance
- ❖ Install and maintain tree protection fencing throughout the duration of construction
- ❖ Limit disturbance such as grading and excavation within structural root zones
- ❖ Conduct root pruning and air spading where recommended
- ❖ In sensitive areas, limit surface excavation, and use bridging techniques or pervious materials to protect surface roots

[19]

- Land disturbance can cause soil compaction and adversely affect tree root systems, however a variety of tree protection measures can be used together to protect trees from impacts. These include:
 - Use of tree mats; tree protection fencing;
 - Limiting grading and excavation within structural root zones;
 - Root pruning, air spading, and limiting surface excavation in the most sensitive areas.
- When a site is chosen, a tree preservation plan will be developed in accordance with the City's Landscape Guidelines, under the direction of a Certified Arborist, and in coordination with the

City's Urban Forestry and Natural Resources staff.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS Playground Relocation – Stormwater Management Options



Permeable pavement BMP under construction at the Fort Ward picnic shelter pathway

Stormwater management is required and will be determined when a playground location is chosen. As applicable, recommendations from the Fort Ward Drainage Master Plan will be incorporated into the playground stormwater plan. Stormwater management options include:

- ❖ Pervious surfaces (porous playground surfacing, permeable pavers, Flexi-pave, etc.)
- ❖ Establish and maintain new Forest Conservation areas in the park for native species
- ❖ Install and maintain new bioretention basins/rain gardens
- ❖ Install and maintain level spreaders (in low traffic areas of turf cover)
- ❖ Impacts to trees and cultural resources will be closely evaluated when selecting the stormwater management method



[20]

- Stormwater management will be required for the chosen site. As applicable, recommendations from the Fort Ward Drainage Master Plan will be incorporated into the playground stormwater plan.
- The following stormwater management options may be pursued. Some of these methods have been used in previous projects at Fort Ward. Options include:
 - Pervious surfaces such as porous playground surfacing, permeable pavers, and Flexi-pave
 - Establishing and maintaining new Forest Conservation areas in the park for native species

- Install and maintain new bioretention basins or rain gardens; and
- Install and maintain level spreaders in low traffic areas of turf cover.
- Impacts to trees and cultural resources will be closely evaluated when selecting the stormwater management method.

FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation - Site B, Near the Existing
Playground



https://alexandria.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=29&coa_view_id=29&coa_clip_id=5530

[21]

We'll now look at Site B in detail. This video shows the existing conditions for Site B which is located upslope from the existing playground.

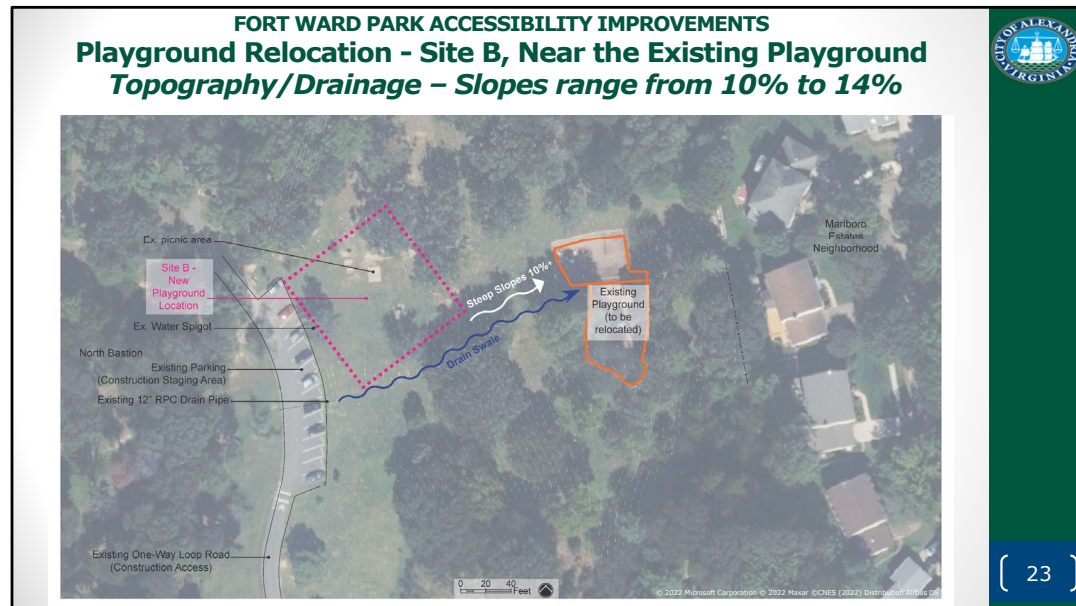
FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation - Site B, Near the Existing Playground
May/June 2022 Community Feedback



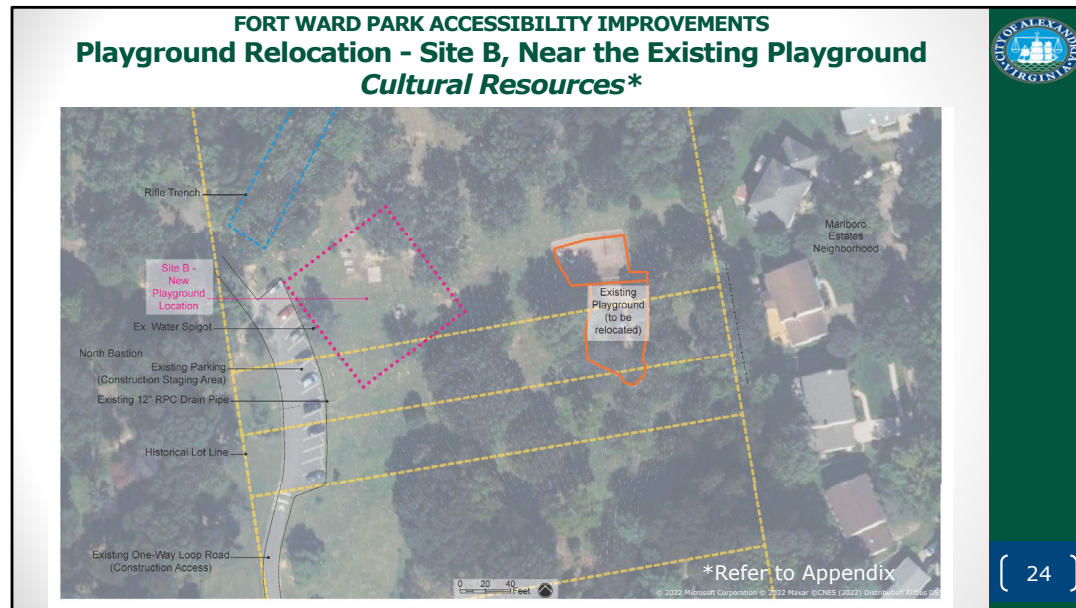
<i>Concerns</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
❖ Location is in the proximity of the rifle trench	❖ Appears to have less impacts to natural resources
❖ Playground is closer to the park road and more visible	❖ Park restrooms are within walking distance via the park road
	❖ Existing water source
	❖ Construction access

[22]

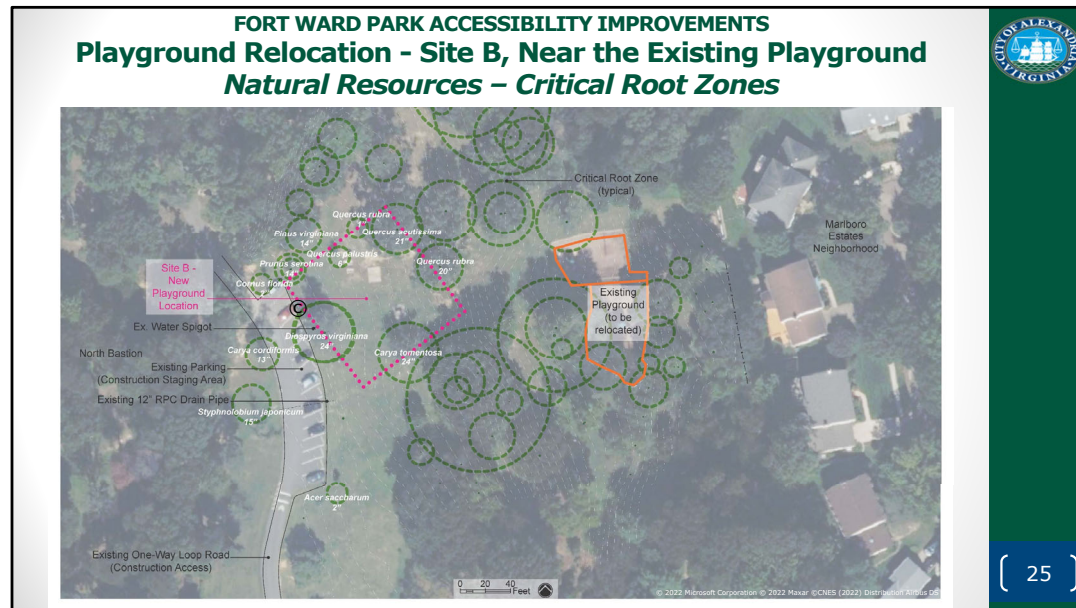
- Community feedback from last May and June indicate the following concerns: the proximity of the rifle trench and the proximity to the park road
- Opportunities include potentially less impact to natural resources;
- The park restrooms are located within walking distance via the park road;
- There is also an existing waterline at the site;
- Potential to use the parking lot as construction access



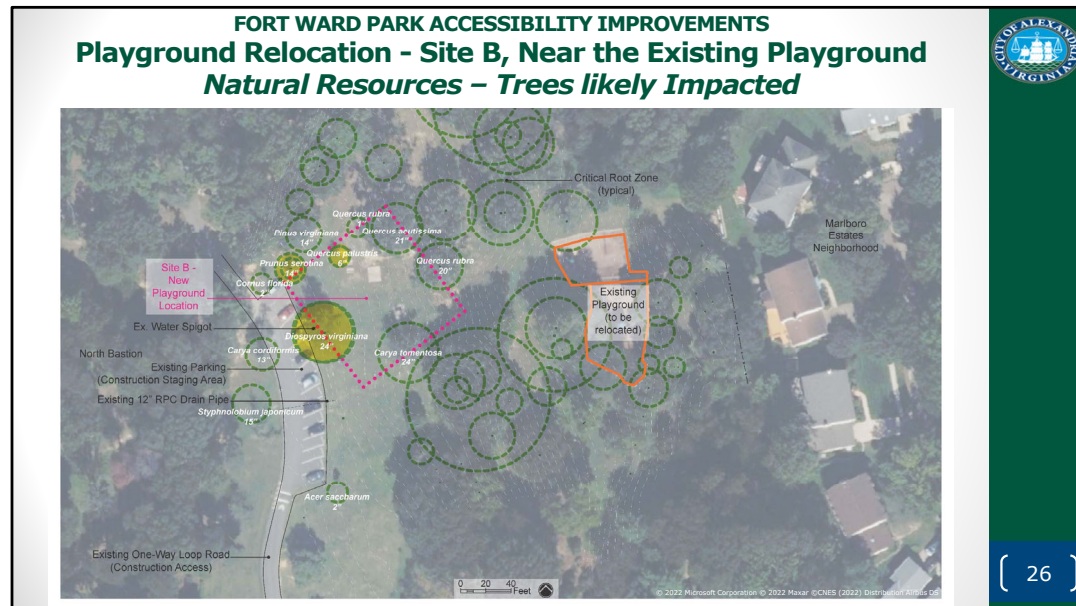
- The next series of slides support the initial site assessment for Sites B and D, as shown on the Playground Site Assessment Criteria slide 7.
- First, we will look at the topography of Site B. The topography in this area of the park is steep with slopes ranging from 10-14%.
- To provide an accessible route to the existing playground, significant ground disturbance would occur . Construction of a low impact accessible route is feasible with the Site B location, near the existing parking lot.
- An existing swale, originating at the parking lot, drains down the hill and should be avoided when siting the playground.



- The Office of Historic Alexandria reviewed Site B for cultural resources and prepared a Preliminary Archaeological Assessment. Site B is located just south of the rifle trench, a Civil War earthwork. Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicate that the potential for significant Civil War cultural resources at this location is low.
- Site B is also located within historical lot lines from the African American Fort Community. Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicate that the potential for significant cultural resources related to the Fort Community at this location is low.



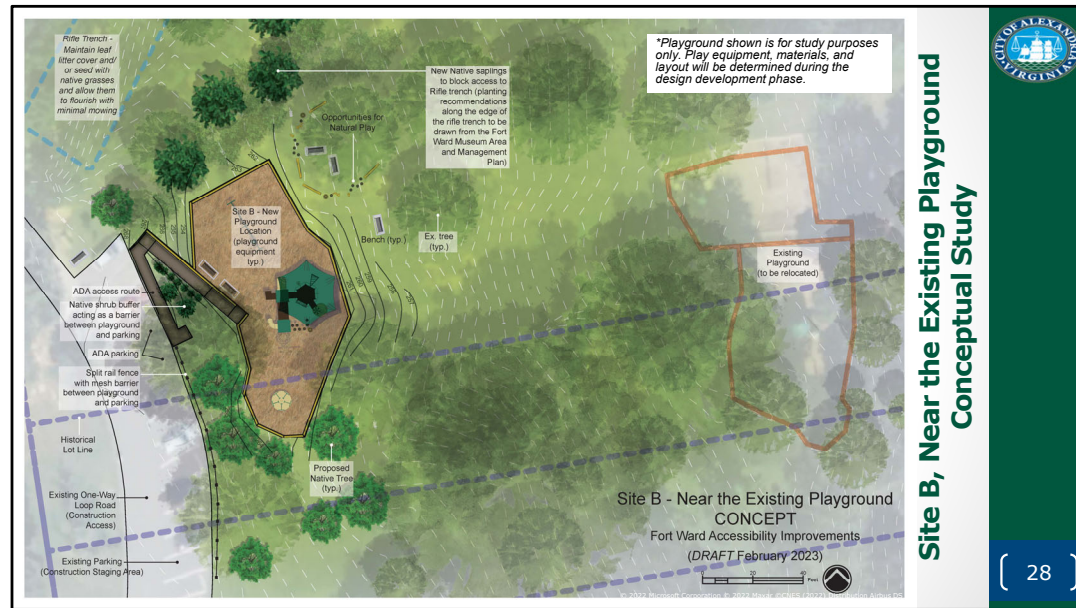
- Tree cover is sparser at the top of the hill, near parking, so impact to critical root zones can be minimized. Established trees in the vicinity of Site B include a 24" persimmon, a 14" black cherry, a 6" pin oak, a 21" sawtooth oak, a 20" red oak, and a 24" hickory.



- Urban Forestry and Natural Resources identified trees that need to be preserved on site, and tree removal is to be minimized. With Site B, it is likely that the persimmon, cherry, and pin oak would be impacted. Through tree preservation measures, the persimmon and black cherry would be retained with no disturbance to the tree’s structural root zone. The 6” pin oak would need to be transplanted.



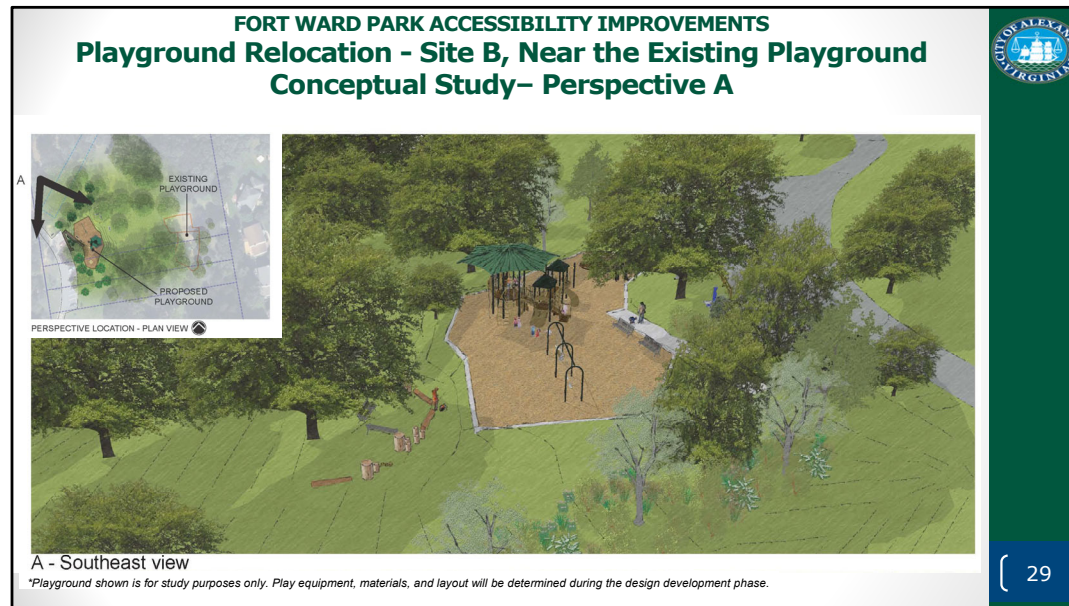
- For playground safety, standard guidance recommends that the playground be at least 30' from parking or vehicular areas. It is feasible to locate the playground outside of this 30' buffer.



- This concept study shows how a playground might be sited with minimal impact to the park. Please note that the playground shown is for study purposes only. Playground equipment, materials, and layout will be determined during the design development phase.
- In this conceptual study, an ADA accessible route would connect accessible parking with the playground. A combination of native shrubs and a split rail fence would offer additional buffer, acting as a barrier between parking and the playground.
- The site could support play opportunities for ages 5-12.
- A buffer of new native saplings would serve as a barrier between

the rifle trench and the playground. Recommendations for this planting would be drawn from guidance provided in the Fort Ward Museum Area Management Plan.

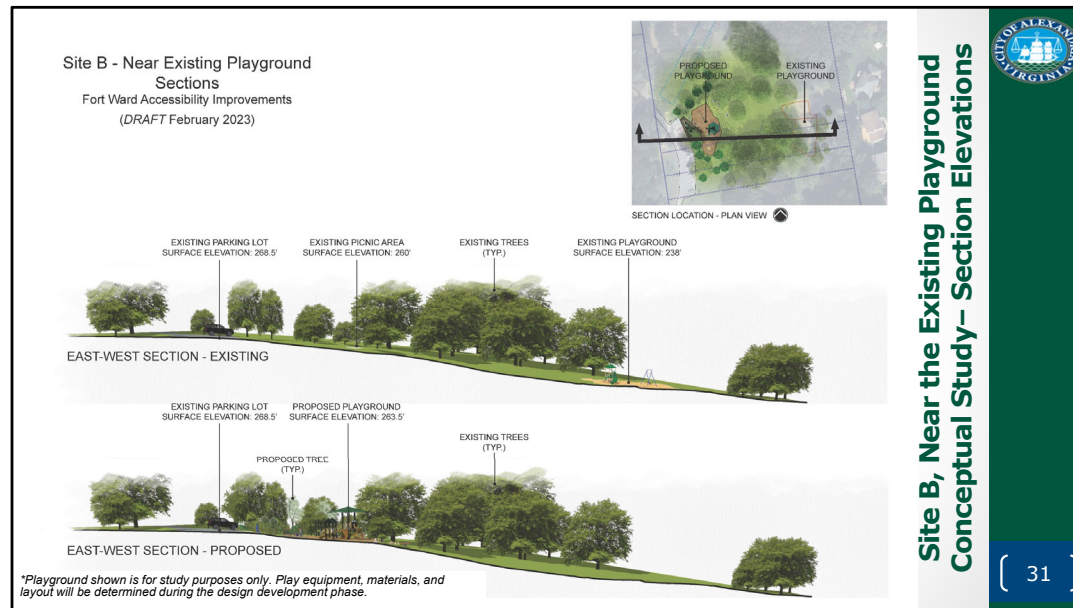
- Native trees could also be planted at the perimeter of the playground to provide shade and to bolster the existing park canopy.



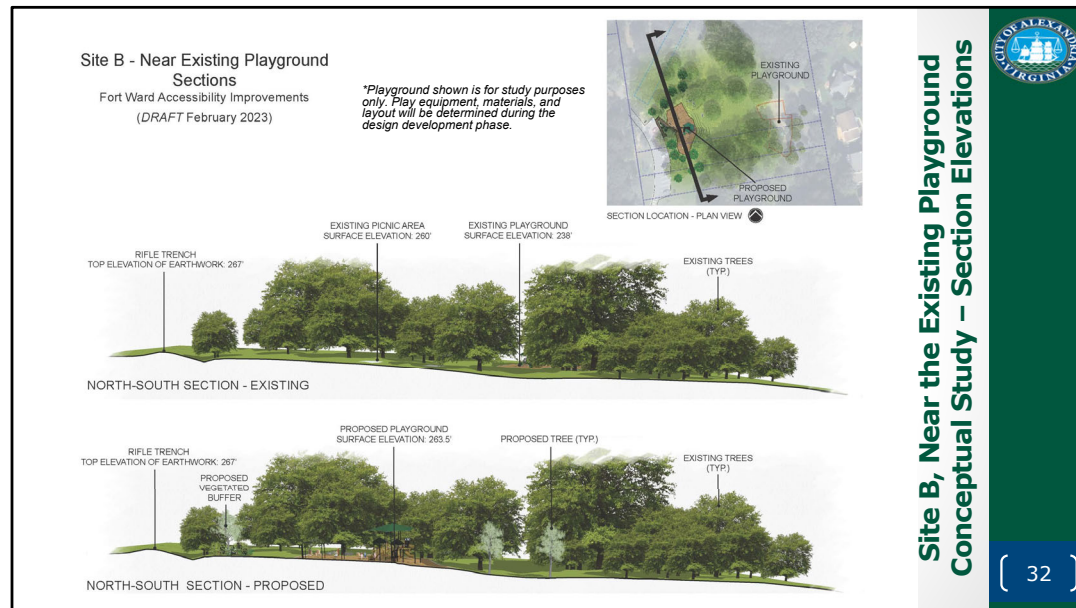
- This birds-eye, southeast view provides a glimpse of the playground scale at Site B. A vegetative buffer between the playground and the rifle trench is illustrated at the bottom right, and the impact to the overall character of the site is minimized with the playground tucked behind a perimeter of tree plantings.



- This birds-eye, northeast view also provides a glimpse of the playground scale at Site B. ADA parking is at the bottom left, linked with an accessible route to the playground for ease of access for any wheeled visitors, including strollers



- This East-West section-elevation study provides a sense of the topography across Site B. The section at the top shows the existing playground to the right and existing parking on the left. This graphic emphasizes the challenge of providing an accessible route from the top to the bottom of the landform: the elevation change is roughly 30.5 feet.
- The bottom section illustrates the Site B proposed playground location at the top of the hill, with proximity to the existing parking area. Minimal disturbance is needed to create an accessible route from the ADA parking area to the playground.



- Looking east, roughly from the parking lot, these section elevations show the relationship between the rifle trench (at the far left) with study Site B.
- The existing playground location is shown in the top section, tucked behind the existing trees, and the proposed Site B playground is shown in the bottom section. A vegetated buffer is illustrated between the rifle trench and the proposed playground, at the bottom left of your screen.

**FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation - Site D, Near the
Amphitheater**



https://alexandria.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=29&coa_view_id=29&coa_clip_id=5532



[33]

We'll now look at Site D in detail. This video shows the existing conditions for Site D. Site D is located at the west side of Fort Ward Park, just south of the amphitheater and north of the existing restroom.

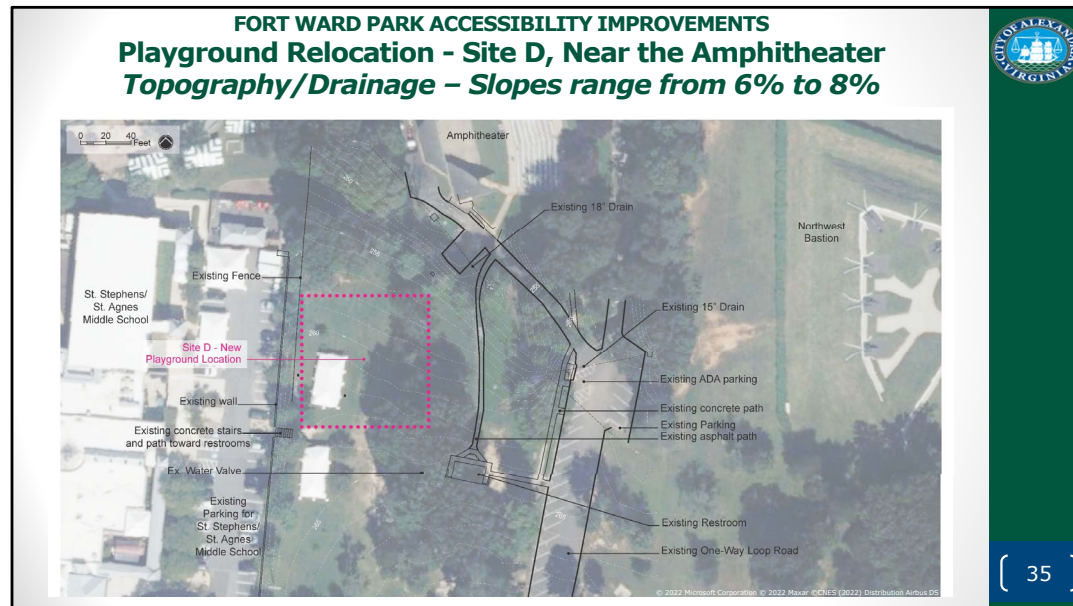
FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation - Site D, Near the Amphitheater
May/June 2022 Community Feedback



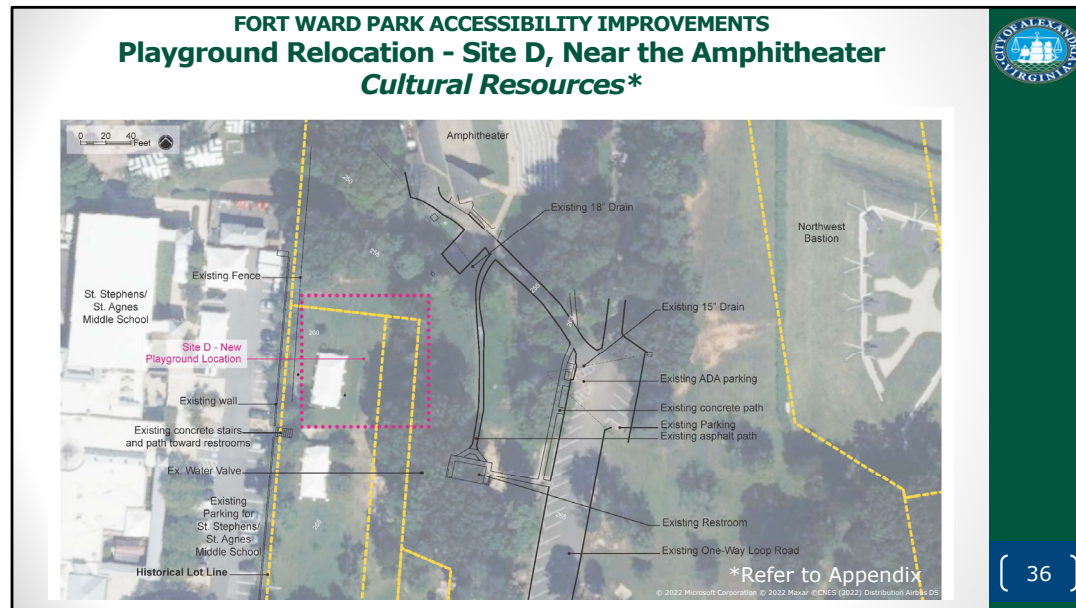
<i>Concerns</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
❖ Location is on land formerly owned by the Peters and Jackson families	❖ Park restrooms are located within the area
❖ Playground is less visible from the park road	❖ Existing water source
❖ Construction access	❖ Proximity to amphitheater and picnic areas
❖ Impacts to trees	❖ Parking availability

[34]

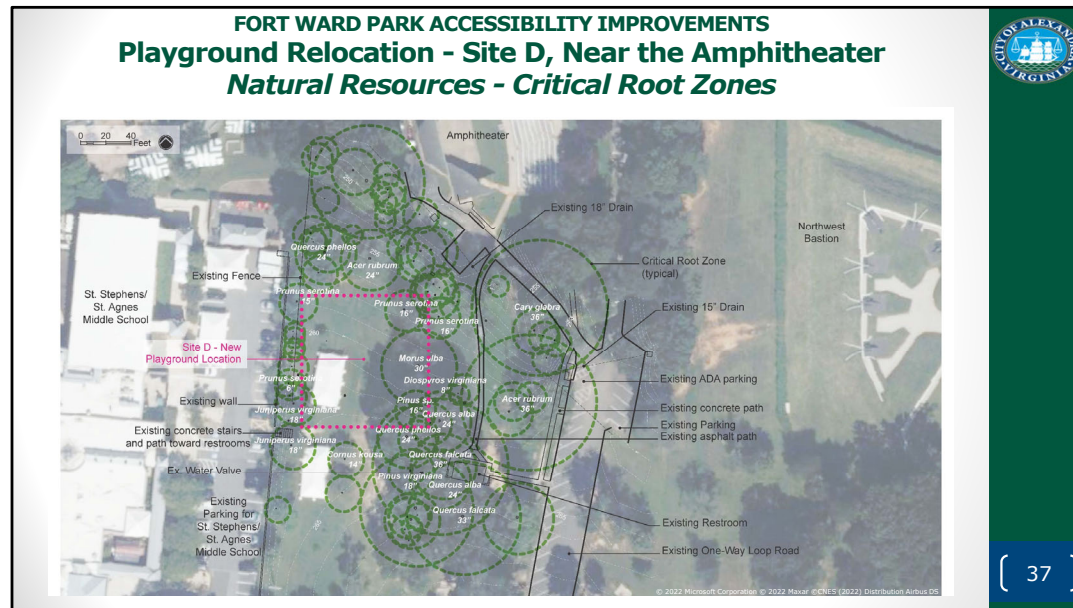
- Community feedback from last May and June indicate the following concerns: Impacts to cultural resources. The location is on land formerly owned by the Peters and Jackson families.
- The location is also setback from the park road and less visible from a safety and security perspective.
- This site contains many trees. Impacts to trees were a concern, especially in relation to construction access.
- Opportunities include adjacency to existing park restrooms, existing water access, proximity to other recreation areas such as the amphitheater and picnic areas, and ample parking



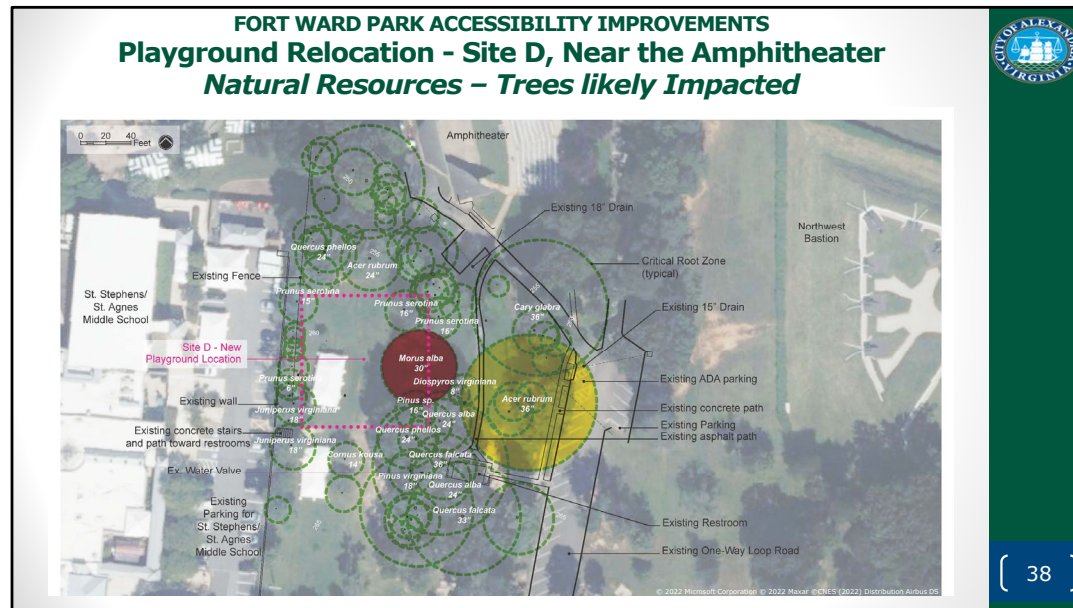
- Site D is located at the west side of Fort Ward Park, just south of the amphitheater and north of the existing restroom. Existing parking for St. Stephens/St. Agnes Middle school is to the west, separated from the park by an existing fence and retaining wall. The existing ADA parking and the park one-way loop road are just to the east (on the right).
- Slopes at this site are generally less steep, but steepness increases as you travel north, past the Site D location, and downhill toward the Amphitheater.
- There are no major drainage structures or swales in the vicinity of Site D.



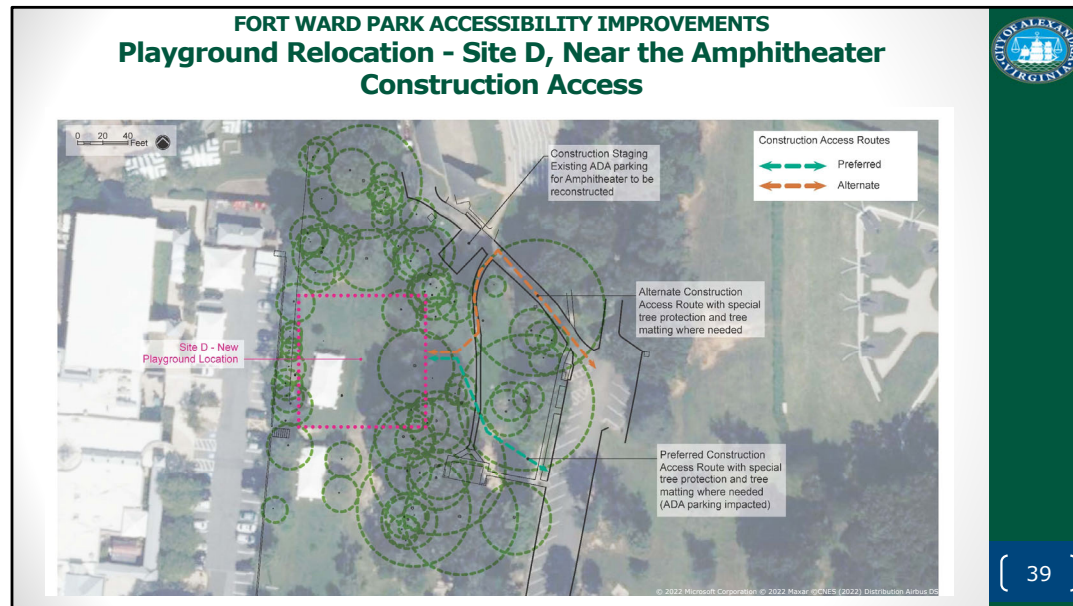
- As with study Site B, the Office of Historic Alexandria reviewed Site D for cultural resources and prepared a Preliminary Archaeological Assessment. Site D is located within historical lot lines from the African American Fort Community. This location is within the bounds of land owned by the James Jackson family from 1894-1925, and immediately north from a lot owned by the John Peters family from 1913 to 1960.
- Archaeological survey testing and historical research indicate that the potential for significant Civil War cultural resources at this location is low. The location is less visible from the loop road.



- As with Site B, tree preservation is essential, and tree removal is to be limited. Established trees in the vicinity of Site B include two 16" black cherries, a 30" mulberry, 8" persimmon, 16" pine, two 24" white oaks, and a 36" red maple.



- Here, too, Urban Forestry and Natural Resources identified trees that should be preserved on site. With Site D, it is likely that the 28” mulberry and the 36” red maple would be impacted due to construction access needs. With tree preservation measures, the red maple would be retained with no disturbance to the tree’s structural root zone. The mulberry would be removed.

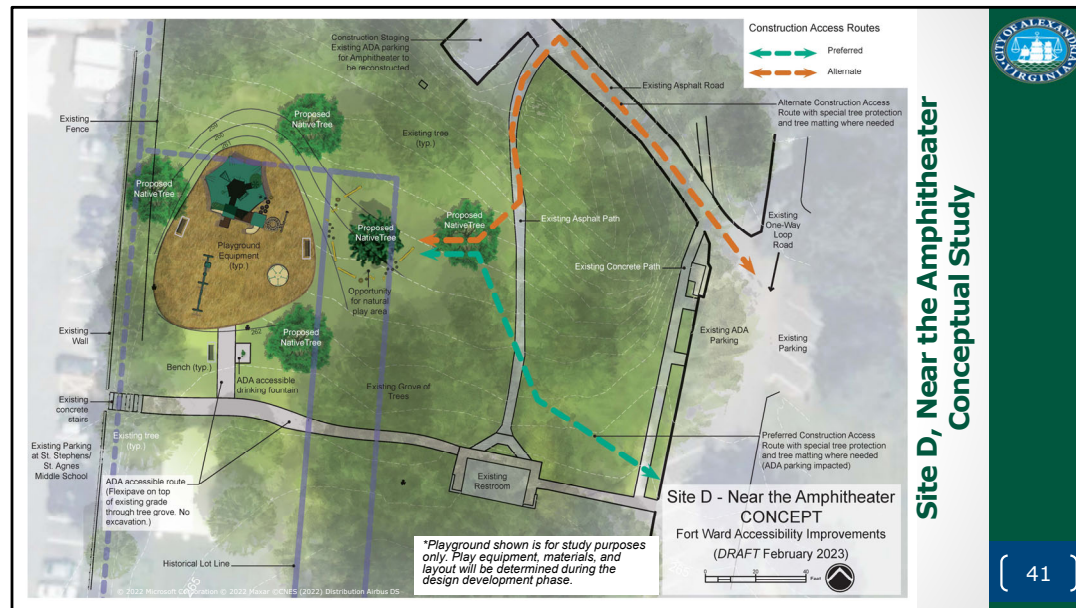


- Due to Site D's distance from the loop road, construction access and staging are more challenging.
- Possible construction access routes are shown here as dashed lines. The preferred construction access route is shown in bluish green, and the alternate construction access route is shown in orange.

Measures to preserve existing trees would be implemented.



- Again, we want to be sure that the playground location is outside of the 30' buffer from the parking area and loop road. While the St. Stephens/St. Agnes Middle School parking is just to the west of the playground (left on your screen), there is less concern for its proximity to the playground, as there is an existing fence, retaining wall, and vegetation between Site D and the lot.



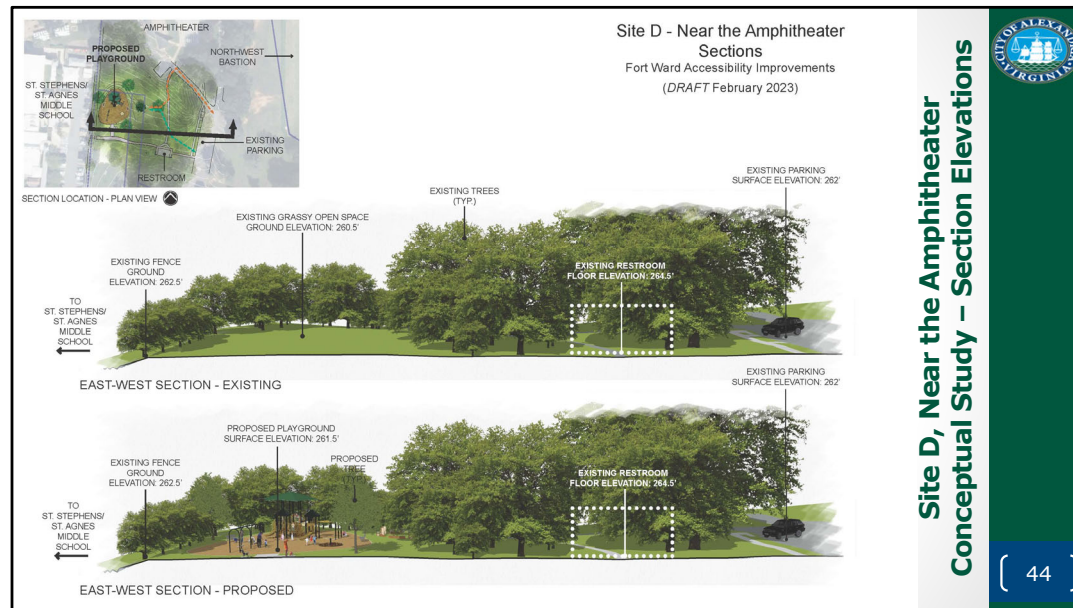
- Illustrated here is the playground study for Site D. An accessible route would link the existing restrooms with the playground. This route could be constructed of Flexipave on top of the existing grade through the grove of existing trees, so that little to no excavation would be required.
- The playground would be sited in the relatively level, open, grassy area north and west of the grove of existing trees.
- Preferred and alternate construction routes would not impact the proposed native trees, as trees would be installed after the playground construction.



- Here is a bird’s-eye view of the Site D study looking toward the northeast. The accessible route to the playground is in the foreground.
- The playground is tucked within an enclave of existing and proposed trees providing both shade and a vegetated buffer from the rest of the park.
- Again, the actual equipment, materials, and layout will be determined with design development.



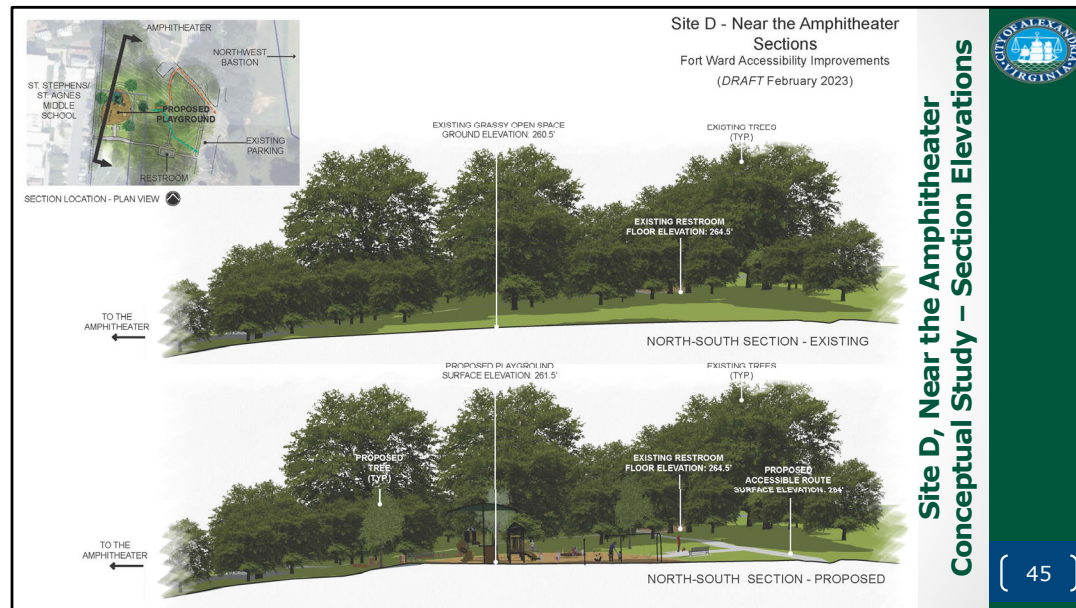
- This view is toward the southwest, with the accessible route to the playground at the top of the image



- These East-West section-elevation studies provide a sense of the topography across Site D. Looking at the top section from left to right, the topography drops off toward the St. Stephens/St. Agnes Middle School parking lot and rises near the existing vegetation and existing fence. Continuing to the east—toward the right on your screen—is a relatively level, existing grassy open space (Site D). There are relatively gentle slopes from the existing grassy open space to the restrooms, and to the existing ADA parking.

The proposed East-West section elevation, at the bottom, retains the same topographic relationship from east to west. Minimal

disturbance is needed to create an accessible route from the ADA parking area to the playground.



- These north-south section cuts illustrate the gradual slope toward the amphitheater, noted at the left on your screen. With the top, existing section, Site D is generally the grassy open space at the center. The existing bathroom is toward the right on your screen, tucked behind existing trees.
- In the bottom, proposed section, playground Site D is at the center of the image, with the accessible route to the existing bathroom at the right.
- These sections emphasize Site D's proximity to the restroom and low impact constructability of the accessible route, while remaining topographically higher in elevation than the

amphitheater area of the park. Site D is separated from, yet near park amenities- the restrooms, picnic areas, and the amphitheater.


FORT WARD PARK ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS
Playground Relocation
Site B and Site D Conceptual Study
Community Feedback and Engagement

- **February 22, 2023:** Playground Community Meeting #4; 7 p.m.
Meeting Registration Link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CcgDVY2kTTGkfl7zPQS2Zw
- **March 4 and 11, 2023:** Playground Community Open Houses, 10 a.m. - Noon
St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, 4401 West Braddock Road

Comments and questions may be submitted through March 31, 2023
Community Comment Form: <https://www.research.net/r/JR8WR3X>

Community Engagement:
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/parks/fort-ward-park-and-museum-area-management-plan#CommunityEngagement>

Project Manager:
Judy Lo, ASLA, PLA
Principal Planner, Capital Development
Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
judy.lo@alexandriava.gov
703.746.5490



Community Comment Form
Scan QR Code



[46]

This concludes our formal presentation. The meeting recording and slide transcript will be posted tomorrow on the Fort Ward Management Plan webpage.

The next events include open houses, scheduled for Saturday, March 4 and Saturday March 11, from 10am to Noon at the St. Stephens and St Agnes Middle School

An online comment form has also been created. The QR code to this form is at the bottom of the screen.

We are aiming to gather feedback by the end of March, and will also be reaching out directly to other groups and individuals who could not attend tonight. We encourage you to share this information with your neighbors and other interested parties.

To start the question and comments, if you would like to speak, please use the raise your hand function at the bottom of the screen. After the speakers, we will review the comments in the chat, if time allows.

APPENDIX

- Alexandria Archaeology, Preliminary Archaeological Assessment, Fort Ward Park, Option Area B and D, January 2023
- <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2023-02/Appendix%20PAA%20for%20Option%20B%20and%20D%20final%20February%202023.pdf>

