



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee
From: Dave Semple
Director of Parks Operations
Re: McLean Park Grass Cutting

To Parks, Rec & Culture - Feb 24, 2004
Date: February 12, 2004
File: 2345-20-mcmc1

Staff Recommendation

That the present level of grounds maintenance for McLean Park in the Hamilton area be retained.

Dave Semple
Director of Parks Operations
(3350)

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Recreation & Cultural Services	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

Staff Report

Origin

At the meeting of the Parks of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday, June 24th 2003, the following was referred, *“That staff review the maintenance procedures of McLean Park and include in the report back to Committee input from the area residents”*. This referral is in response to that request.

Analysis

In 1997 staff, a community group and consultants commenced the planning for McLean Park site. This group met once a week for three months to come up with a concept plan that was affordable and met the community needs. This process culminated in the plan being presented to the community at a public information meeting held in April 1997 (see Attachment 1). The plan identified that a naturalized meadow area would be incorporated into the park site. The plan as well received by the community. Council approved the plan and the park was constructed as planned later that year.

The meadow areas of McLean Park comprise about five acres of the 11 acre site. They are intended to enhance the environment and encourage passive activities, and are placed strategically to provide a buffer between the active park areas and the residences that abut the park.

There are pathways running through the meadows with closely mowed strips on each side of the pathway for maintenance and safety reasons. The meadows are shaped to enhance the design along contour lines and this park has been recognized as a great example of naturalization by the Communities in Bloom program.

Overall there are currently 26 parks in the park inventory that have long grass areas as part of the design. The size of the area in each park ranges from almost all to token patches and the total of all areas is 139 acres (see Attachment 2).

Although these areas in parks are found world-wide, some people have trouble accepting this concept in neighbourhoods where most yards are manicured. There are a few calls every year from residents of such areas concerning rodent problems, allergy sufferers, safety issues, potential fire hazard, weed encroachment, and just plain aesthetics. These concerns have been answered individually. There are also calls from residents who don't want these areas cut at all.

To manage these concerns, strategies have been adopted to ease the concerns. They are:

- The meadow concept is a part of plans for new parks only although the principle could apply to established parks everywhere. This has been in place for the last 10 years.
- There are one or more rough cuts per year to control noxious weeds, blackberries and brush where it is not wanted.
- A buffer zone of close mowed grass between meadow areas and private lots reduces concerns of invasion of weeds and rodents as well as concern over fire hazard.

- Wild flowers are planted with the specialized grasses. However, they will probably be choked out by aggressive species of grasses and clover

Staff have consulted with the Hamilton Community Association on this matter. The consensus was that the meadow area is acceptable and can be enhanced by wildflower or bulb planting and an addition flail mowing annually.

Financial Impact

If the level of grass cutting service were to change on McLean Park from rough to manicured cut, the financial impact is summed up in the following table.

Current Practice (Rough cut)		Additional Level (Manicured cut)	
Brush cutting/Acre	\$72.00	Gangmowing/Acre	\$27.50
McLean Park per cut	\$360.00	McLean Park per cut	\$137.50
Annual Cost (2 cuts)	\$720.00	Annual Costs (22 cuts)	\$3025.00
		Park Prep/Clean Up (\$1500/Acre)	\$7,500.00
		Total First year Start Up	\$10,250.00

The impact on the Operational Budget for McLean Park would amount to an additional \$9,805 in the first year and \$2,305 in subsequent years.

Conclusion








The present level of service with some minor adjustments is acceptable to the community. For both environmental and financial reasons, the present maintenance procedures would appear to be worth sustaining.



Gordon Barstow
Manager, Parks Operations
(1210)

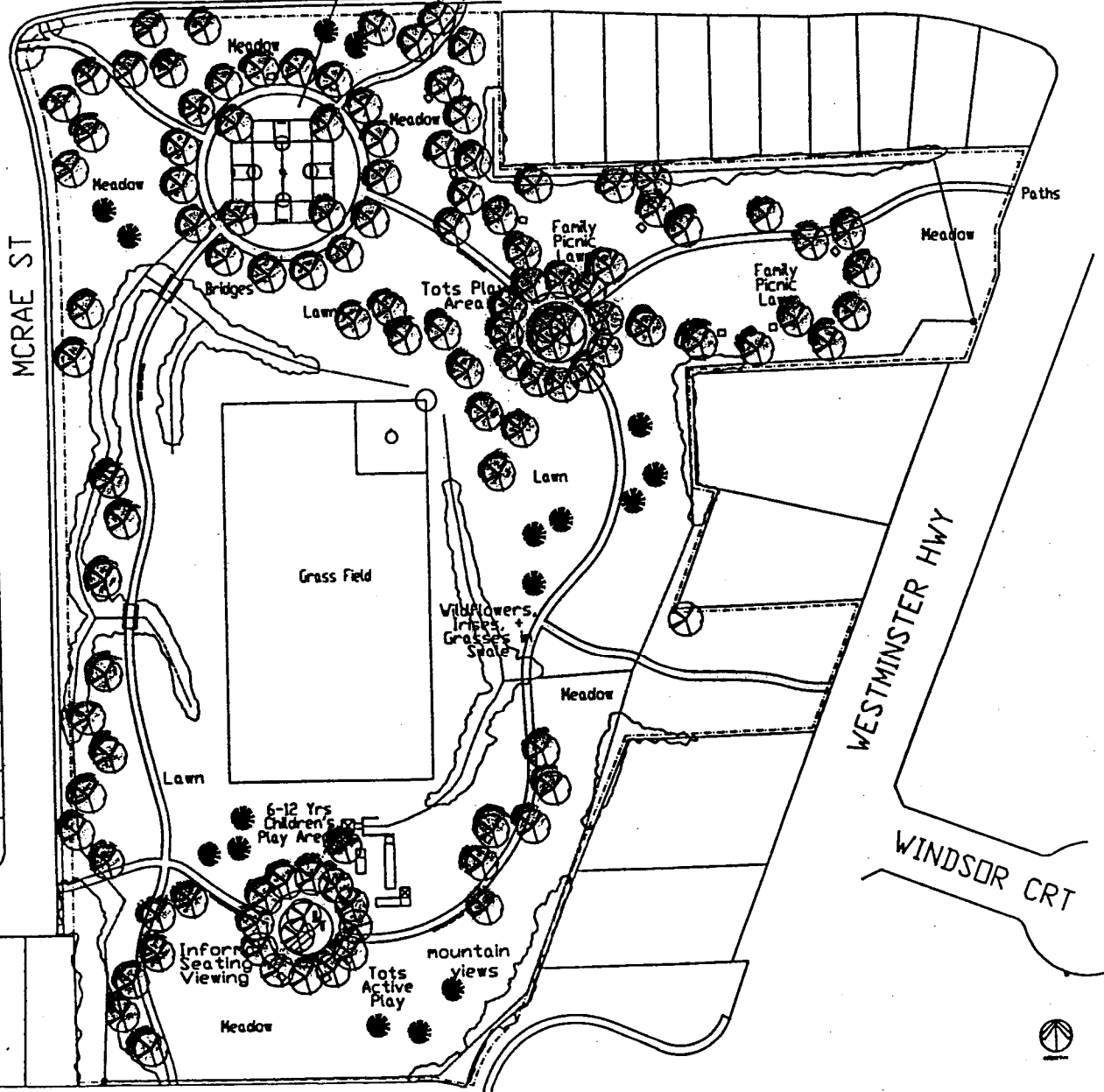
GSB:gsb

Key

 Existing Contours	 Swale	 Proposed Deciduous Trees
 Proposed Contours	 Proposed Evergreen Trees	 Picnic Table
 Benches		

Community Gathering
Basketball & Roller Hockey

MCLEAN AVE



Concept for review 10/15/97
 Prepared by:
 City of Richmond
 Planning Department
 City of Richmond, Virginia

Stevenson & Associates
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 1000 N. 1st Street
 Richmond, VA 23219

PROJECT
MCLEAN PARK
 RICHMOND, VA

FOR
CITY OF RICHMOND
 PROJECT

PARK CONCEPT PLAN

DATE	06/27
BY	collyer
NO.	1/2/97
SCALE	1:500

Naturalised Areas in Richmond Parks

Park Name	Size of Park (Acres)	Size of Natural Area (Acres)
Agassiz Park	1.6	1.4
Airport Road Park	9.3	4
Bath Slough Trail	12	10
Boyd Playground	42	0.2
Britannia Park	8.2	3.5
Dover Park	7.7	0.5
Garden City Park	20	Under review
Garry Point Park	38.7	30
Hamilton School/Park	12.3	4
Imperial Landing Park	6	1
Kartner Playground Park	1	0.5
Kilby Parkette	0.75	0.4
King George Park	48.75	3
Kozier Park	0.77	0.4
Mc Donald Beach	25	20
Mc South	8.3	Under review
McCallum Park	7.15	4
McLean Park	10.8	5
Minoru Park Canal	65	1
Mitchell Island Tressel Park	1.73	1.5
Number 7 Road Pier Park	2.38	2
Odlin Park	6.3	0.5
Odlinwood	8	1.7
South Arm Park Canal	56.7	1
Spil u kwuks	19.5	6
Talmey School/Park	9.9	2
Terra Nova N W Quadrant Park	50.5	Under review
Terra Nova Natural Area	35	35
Wye Trail	1	0.5

Total of Naturalised Area

139.1







