Preliminary Sketch Plan for Fort Hunter Park

Public Presentation
November 19, 2009
Fort Hunter Park
Total park acreage = 45.66 ac.
1. What are Fort Hunter’s best attributes?

2. What makes Fort Hunter distinctive and unique when compared to other nearby parks?

3. What, if anything, would you like to change about Fort Hunter?

4. What concerns, if any do you have regarding:
   - Vehicular Traffic, Pedestrian Circulation and Parking Availability?
   - Lighting and Accessibility of Public Gathering Spaces?
   - Perceptions of Park Safety and Security?
   - Conveyance of Historical and Environmental Messages?

5. Are some desirable amenities presently missing from your park?

6. What traffic-calming measures, if any, would be appropriate for Front Street?

7. If you were to re-visit Fort Hunter in ten years, what other improvements would you hope to see?

8. If you were to tell Dauphin County representatives how best to improve your park with public funding, what prioritized improvements would you recommend?
Overall Preliminary Sketch Plan
Complete a Market Study and Architectural Analysis to determine the best adaptive re-use strategies (e.g. welcome center, restaurant, café, produce stand, canoe/kayak rental facility).

Provide terraced parking in response to steep topography, and respond to sub-surface environmental constraints inherent to the former service station use.
Complete an Ecological Study/ Floodplain Restoration Analysis to determine feasibility of sediment removal for improved water quality and restored habitat.

Provide educational signage to convey environmental/historic transportation messages to park visitors.
Design the amphitheater in response to existing topography, solar orientation and programming needs for small or medium-sized events.

Locate it where accessible from nearby parking and where planted sound barriers can be established.
Relocate corn crib and stage a bit further north to increase lawn area seating opportunities with desirable views toward outdoor performances.

Explore the use of geothermal wells in lawn area to heat and cool some park facilities.
Clear a segment of the canal's waterway, and link a paved towpath to the parks trail system.
Incorporate canal-themed play equipment and public art nearby.
Without displacing active recreational areas, replace a portion of the park’s manicured lawn with a lower maintenance meadow.

Educate trail users on the value of such habitat restoration and the use of native plantings.
Incorporate parking for 52 additional vehicles, limo-sized turn-around and a guest drop-off area.

Link a new scenic overlook, and church restroom facilities to the parks trail system.
Seasonal Non-motorized Boat Launch Site

- Direct River Access Alternative
Seasonal Non-motorized Boat Launch Site
- Indirect River Access Alternative
Vehicular Circulation
Replace N. Front Street’s paved shoulders with stabilized turf to narrow the roadway corridor, lower vehicular speeds and encourage ‘traffic calming’.

Incorporate a ‘rain garden’ within the N. Front Street / Fishing Creek median to improve storm water quality.
Add a split rail fence to delineate vehicular access to special event parking (lawn area), and utilize paved trail/access drive to reduce lawn damage during special events.
Delineate three pedestrian crosswalks on N. Front Street and clearly define park entrances with oversized stone piers inspired by an existing gateway.

Create a looped trail system which includes a paved canal path and, where needed, split rail fencing to delineate public versus private spaces.

Incorporate additional signage along all pedestrian trails to provide abundant educational opportunities.
Pedestrian Circulation

Resurface the Mansion’s carriage drive and other walkways with gravel adhered to an asphalt paving base.

Replace worn turf areas with paved pathways.

Accommodate ADA accessibility throughout the park.
Install two pedestrian bridges over Fishing Creek to effectively link north and south park areas.
If additional light is needed for enhanced safety and security perceptions, utilize contemporary fixtures which mimic architectural features (louvers, standing-seam metal roof) without creating a false sense of history.

Consider illumination of specimen trees and building facades with fixtures set flush with the surrounding terrain making fixtures nearly invisible during daylight hours.
Other Suggested Site Enhancements

- Remove all invasive plants (e.g. Euonymus, Bittersweet, Norway Maples) throughout park.
- Open key views toward the Susquehanna River from trail and overlook areas via selective vegetation removal.
- Restore period-appropriate or native plantings.
- Add bird blinds in several diverse park ecosystem areas.
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Subtotal: $2,629,000.00
Contingency (10%): $202,900.00

TOTAL: $2,832,900.00
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