

Chapter 5- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Guiding Principles for Pantops emphasize protection of scenic vistas and maintaining a sense of open space as Pantops continues to grow. It is important with future density increases, that there be intentional creation and preservation of additional natural areas, parks and urban landscapes to preserve the unique scenic and recreational qualities of Pantops. It is especially important that the Rivanna River corridor be maintained as a focal point for the community. The Green Infrastructure recommendations of the Pantops Master Plan are intended to make open space integral to overall community design. The Green Infrastructure system is intended to protect natural systems and to provide greenway connections for residents. Residents and visitors to the area should have convenient access to parks, public gathering places, and natural views whether they are at home, work, or play.

The County's Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining the public parks and greenway system and for obtaining necessary easements and dedications. Currently, the County manages Darden Towe Park, which is jointly owned by the City and County. The County also owns approximately 25 acres along the Rivanna River from Darden Towe Park south to and around Riverbend Apartments.

Albemarle County's Greenways Plan recognizes the benefits and opportunities that a greenway system provides. It offers additional recommendations on greenways in general that should be consulted as the Pantops Master Plan is implemented. The County's Greenways Plan recommends a trail along the Rivanna River and portions of the trail have been completed. Parking is available at Darden Towe Park and along Free Bridge Lane to access the trail. The Master Plan recommends additional trail head access points for the public, with possible locations at Riverbend Drive, State Farm Boulevard, and in Peter Jefferson Place. The Pantops Master Plan emphasizes the importance of completing the greenway trail and linear park along the Rivanna River as a public park and recommends additional off-river trails, both public access and some private, throughout Pantops and into adjoining Rural Areas.

It is anticipated that the greenways system in Pantops may include off-river paths within neighborhoods maintained by owner's associations or private property owners, with the County working to facilitate the provision of these trails. Additionally, pocket parks and neighborhood scale parks may be owned and maintained by private associations but are intended to be accessible to the public. The County's Parks and Recreation department is expected to be responsible for Pantops community and regional scale parks.

The Green Infrastructure Map illustrates both green space for conservation areas of sensitive environmental features and more formal open spaces with a parks and greenways designation. The Green Infrastructure Map depicts existing and desired future parks as both public and semi-public spaces. The map shows the minimum amount of open space needed for preservation and a park system.

Each neighborhood in Pantops is expected to have a range of open space types, including those centrally located and dispersed throughout Pantops. Each neighborhood center is intended to have green space elements similar to what is discussed as the Civic Green Center type, which is primarily an urban open space and not just a natural area. A Civic Green includes uses fronting onto the center, multiple access points to neighboring residential or employment areas and design elements that provide a sense of arrival and civic presence. In the Mixed Use Neighborhoods this may include a square or green, as discussed in Design Approaches section of the Neighborhood Model. The Peter Jefferson/Martha Jefferson neighborhood will have a larger park component central to the neighborhood of approximately six acres that will connect to the greenway system.

The Pantops Master Plan recommends linking natural and historic/cultural assets, taking advantage of opportunities for public awareness of resources and potential heritage tourism. Some key historic sites have been identified on the Green Infrastructure map as well as properties in Pantops that are 50 years or older. There are important cultural and historical resources in Pantops, especially along the Rivanna River, that the greenway network will make more accessible and better-visited if connected through trails. A more comprehensive, coordinated approach to inventorying resources and establishing this program is recommended.

Water Resources & Stormwater Management

Within the County's Development Areas, streams identified by USGS as perennial require the preservation of a 100-foot wide vegetative buffer on both sides of the stream. This is required through the County's Water Protection Ordinance. Perennial streams within the Pantops area are the Rivanna River and portions of Hickmans Branch and Culpeper Branch.

Intermittent streams within the Development Areas currently do not require the preservation of a vegetative buffer. However, in 2004 the County conducted a detailed assessment of all streams within the Development Areas to identify stream valleys and corridors that should be protected on the basis of ecological integrity and open space/recreational value within the urban/suburban matrix.

Through the assessment process some streams not currently protected under the existing Water Protection Ordinance were prioritized for stream buffer and corridor protection. It was intended that this prioritization would be incorporated into the Water Protection Ordinance to make it enforceable. Such is the case for the unnamed intermittent tributary to the Rivanna that flows northwest from Ashcroft and eventually through Darden Towe Park. This stream was given a high priority for protection, and the assessment recommends that the stream corridor should be preserved to provide access to natural refuge and trails in proximity to development.

The remaining unnamed intermittent tributaries to the Rivanna in the Pantops area were determined during the assessment to be degraded for habitat or natural aesthetic and were not assigned high priority for protection and preservation. The assessment recommends that as an alternative to complete piping these stream corridors can be managed to provide open space, pocket parks, and water features. It is assumed that

these channels will require engineering intervention of one type or another, such as limited piping, channel engineering and ponding.

To accomplish these improvements that the County has identified as being beneficial, but are not currently supported by ordinance language, it is recommended that the master plan utilize the existing water resources category “area of infill and redevelopment” found in Section 17-301 of the Water Protection Ordinance. Additional criteria for stream protection prioritization based on the stream assessment, and additional criteria for stormwater management could be developed and applied to properties within that category.

It is recognized that a significant portion of existing development within the Pantops area predates current stormwater regulations that manage water quantity and quality from development. It is recommended that properties undergoing redevelopment be required to meet these current stormwater regulations, thereby reducing the potential for downstream flooding, reducing erosion downstream, and reducing pollutant loadings.

SUMMARY OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE and CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Expand the existing greenway system** in Pantops as shown conceptually on the *Green Infrastructure Map*. Complete the trail and park along the Rivanna River and important off-river paths connecting neighborhoods to the river and other destinations in the neighborhood.
- Preserve the **Rivanna River**. It is shown as green space on the *Green Infrastructure Map* and will create a **linear park** within the Pantops Neighborhood
- Interconnect **greenspace**, where trails lead to parks, neighborhood centers, or the Rivanna River providing pedestrian and bike facilities.
- Construct major and minor access points (trail heads) to provide primary and secondary convenient access to the Rivanna River Greenway and linear park. These trail heads will provide for public parking and access with suggested locations at Riverbend Drive, Peter Jefferson Place, and near State Farm on South Pantops Drive.
- Create **promotional materials and events to highlight the greenways** to residents and businesses in Pantops. Consider heritage tourism opportunities and establishing an identity to Pantops and the Greenway for marketing purposes.
- Provide parks at the following locations:
 - Within the Gazebo Plaza site.
 - Within the State Farm property, near the corner of State Farm Boulevard and Pantops Drive, as either a community park or park area for the employment district
 - Between Free Bridge Lane and Route 20, south of Elks Drive, potentially as a dog park.
- Create public\semi-public spaces at **scenic viewpoint locations**, both within existing development and in conjunction with proposed developments. These areas should have amenities such as outdoor seating, landscaped plazas, and walking routes.

- Provide **historic interpretation** with the Greenways program along the Rivanna River corridor.
- Acknowledge and preserve the **history of the Pantops** area as the neighborhood builds out to help celebrate the neighborhood's identity.
- **Provide a complete inventory** of historic, cultural, and archeological sites within Pantops. Historic sites previously identified include: Buena Vista, George Rogers Clark Museum, Burnley Tavern, Wilton Farmhouse and farm buildings, Franklin Farm , Pantops Farm, Locust Shade, Piraeus Lock and Dam.
- Elevate the history of Pantops within Civic Greens and other **Neighborhood Centers** with **historic interpretation displays**. Some historic sites should serve as the focal point for Neighborhoods.
- **Preserve** historic buildings and natural landscape features that are unique to Pantops.
- Encourage property owners to pursue National and State register designations.
- Protect the character of **Route 20 as a Virginia Scenic Byway**.
- Promote Route 20/Stony Point Road through Pantops as a route tourists can travel along the Journey through Hallowed Ground tour to reach Monticello from Gettysburg and other Civil War sites.
- Promote **tourism** in Pantops, with the Lewis & Clark Exploratory center and in Peter Jefferson Place.

Refer to Neighborhood Model Design Approaches for Parks & Open Space Guidelines in Appendix.