

Landscape Management Policy and Procedures for Fisher Park in Greensboro, North Carolina

January 2009

Park and Neighborhood History

- **Historic Fisher Park** – Fisher Park is owned by the City of Greensboro and was created in 1902 as part of the first suburban neighborhood to the north of downtown. Over time the park has evolved from a predominately cutover and open area to a varied landscape including gardens, open meadows, a stream floodplain, and mature hardwood forest. Historic features have included Adirondack bridges, a wading pool and grandstand, all of which were removed years ago. Current features include stone entry steps, paved paths, granite bridges, and a stone lined streambed.
- **Fisher Park Neighborhood Association, Inc.** – The Neighborhood Association (FPNA) was created in 1978 in response to development pressure in the Fisher Park area. The mission of FPNA is *to preserve the historic and residential character of the neighborhood, and to work with the City of Greensboro to help maintain our scenic public park.* Over the years FPNA has worked to maintain and improve the park.
- **1980's Streetscape Project** – A City of Greensboro bond issue in the early 1980's funded a significant streetscape project around the park. This work included improved access and drainage, landscaping, decorative streetlights and signposts, defined parking areas with granite or concrete curbs, and exposed aggregate concrete gutters along the edges of the streets around the park.
- **Historic District Status** – Fisher Park was designated a City of Greensboro Historic District in 1982 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. Maintenance and improvements in the Park are subject to guidelines set forth in the *City of Greensboro Historic District Program Manual and Design Guidelines*, and may require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the City prior to commencement.

Park Planning and Development Concepts

- **Park Master Plan** – At the request of FPNA and with approval by the City in 1990, landscape architect and neighbor Chip Callaway of Callaway & Associates prepared a *Restoration and Reforestation Plan* for Fisher Park. This plan includes concept sheets for the East Park and West Park (which are referred to herein as the "Master Plan" for the Park), and street tree planting plans for the entire neighborhood. Parts of the Master Plan have been implemented over time and it will be used as a guide for future projects when feasible. Conditions in the park have changed somewhat since the Master Plan was prepared, with the loss of a number of mature trees and the growth of others, so future plantings may have to be adjusted accordingly.
- **Character and Features of the East Park** – This section of the park is bounded by North Elm Street, North Park Drive, South Park Drive, and North Church Street. The East Park has an open character with scattered mature canopy trees, a number of more recently planted canopy trees, few understory trees, and a few planting beds maintained with mulch. Hawks are sometimes seen perched in the tall trees. An intermittent stream flowing from east to west bisects this side of the park. The stream

has a stone lined bed and is crossed by two granite bridges. There is a gradual slope into the park along North Park Drive and a steeper grade with four sets of stone steps entering from South Park Drive. A main path runs parallel to and on the north side of the stream, and connecting paths lead to the entry steps and corners. A modern playground in the northeast corner of the park is maintained for neighborhood residents and visitors.

- **Character and Features of the West Park** – This section of the park is bounded by North Elm Street, Fisher Park Circle and First Presbyterian Church. The West Park has a natural character of a woodland forest with mature canopy trees, understory trees, and flowering shrubs. People enjoy watching birds and other wildlife here. A perennial stream fed by a spring flows from southeast to northwest. The stream flowing under North Elm Street from the East Park joins the main West Park stream midway. These streams have stone lined beds and are crossed by five granite bridges. In the southern and western portions of the West Park the slopes are steeper and there are several sets of granite steps, along with two more recently installed sets of wood timber steps. This side of the park has a more extensive trail system, along with a number of benches and several picnic tables. The northern portion of the West Park has two open meadow areas.
- **Future Efforts Should Respect Existing Planned Conditions** –
 - Existing trees, shrubs, and groundcovers should be maintained in accordance with the policies for maintenance set forth below.
 - Existing landscaped areas in the East Park should be developed to provide diversity and interest, while maintaining the open character of this side of the park. Understory trees and additional beds may be added as appropriate.
 - Existing landscaped and natural areas in the West Park should be managed to limit excessive growth. The existing meadows in the lower West Park should be maintained as open areas. Natural groundcovers should be maintained.
 - New plantings may be added as appropriate for each side of the park and consistent with the policies for new plantings set forth below.
 - Existing hardscape features (entry steps, paths, bridges, and stone lined streambeds) should be maintained.
 - Future projects and any proposed changes should recognize the history of the park as well as current uses.
- **Future Efforts Should Encourage Wildlife and Sustainability** –
 - Landscaped and natural areas should be designed and maintained to provide habitat and food for songbirds and other desirable urban wildlife species.
 - Planting areas should be planned and designed, and plant species should be chosen, with due consideration for drought tolerance and sustainability.

Policies for Maintenance and New Plantings

• Ongoing Maintenance –

- Existing landscape features should be maintained according to generally accepted management principals, including pruning and thinning as needed.
- Open borders should be maintained where present so that neighbors and citizens can see into the park to appreciate the views and plantings.
- Trees and shrubs lost to drought and other causes should be replaced with appropriate plants (see below regarding new plantings).
- Newly planted trees should be pruned as needed, in consultation with or under the direction of City staff.
- Prolific species such as Black Cherry, Black Locust, Chinese Elm, Mulberry and Sweet Gum may need thinning and seedlings should be culled as they appear.
- Stream banks should be maintained or replanted with appropriate plants (Azalea, Hydrangea, Ironwood, Sassafras, Viburnum and other native species) in accordance with applicable City policies and NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources Ecosystem Enhancement Program Guidelines for Riparian Buffer Restoration (www.nceep.net/news/reports/buffers.pdf).
- Work plans for ongoing maintenance and neighborhood workdays will be reviewed and approved in accordance with the procedures set forth below. Trees over 4" dbh (this means diameter at breast height, which is measured at 4.5' above the ground) shall not be removed without specific approval. Hardscape features (paths, bridges, stone lined streambeds, benches, tables, and trashcans) shall not be altered or removed without specific approval.

• Management of Invasive Species –

- The Greensboro Parks & Recreation Department Invasive Plant Policy is applicable and is made a part of this Landscape Management Policy and Procedures for Fisher Park. A list of invasive exotic species now existing in the park is set forth on page 8 of this Landscape Management Policy and Procedures document.
- Invasive plants should be controlled and new seedlings culled as they appear, with the objective of replacing invasive species with native species over time. Several existing specimens of invasive trees (i.e., larger Mimosas) and shrubs (e.g., glossy leaf Ligustrum) may be retained for educational or aesthetic purposes where the specimen is well formed and has limited negative impact on the surrounding area. Existing ground covers of naturalized invasives (English Ivy and Periwinkle) may be maintained in locations where they can be controlled and prevented from negatively affecting desirable trees and shrubs.

• New Plantings –

- Park plantings should include hardy examples of native species and cultivars. A list of recommended native species is included in the Master Plan and an

updated version of the list is set forth on page 6 of this Landscape Management Policy and Procedures document.

- Certain non-invasive exotic species (specimen plants, antique plants and flowering perennials) may be planted and maintained in the park for interest, effect and seasonal color. A list of some appropriate species is set forth on page 7 of this Landscape Management Policy and Procedures document.
- New plantings should be planned to allow adequate space for growth to mature size without significant pruning.
- Undesirable and prolific species should be thinned or culled over time to allow appropriate native plants to prosper.

FPNA Board and Park Committee Functions

- The FPNA Board of Directors is elected by residents to represent the neighborhood and oversee the functions of the association. The Board elects officers and appoints chairpersons of several FPNA committees. The Board meets monthly and receives regular reports from the Park Committee. Work plans, planting plans, and proposals for special projects in the park should be reviewed and approved by the Board prior to submittal to the City.
- The FPNA Park Committee plans and coordinates workdays, new plantings, and other work on behalf of the neighborhood, and the Committee reviews any proposals by neighbors or others for projects in the park. The chairperson presents or coordinates the presentation of committee recommendations to the Board. Residents who are interested in serving on the Park Committee should contact the current chairperson, the FPNA President, or another member of the Board of Directors.
- The FPNA President and the chairperson of the Park Committee are authorized to communicate with City staff in connection with plans approved by the FPNA Board, maintenance and other routine matters. The FPNA Board of Directors may designate other representatives to communicate with City staff in connection with special projects or for other specific purposes.

Procedures for Approval of Work Plans and Special Projects

- The City of Greensboro is responsible for regular, routine maintenance of the park, including grass mowing, mulching of landscaped areas, and emptying of trash receptacles. City staff or contractors perform this work.
- The FPNA Park Committee chairperson, after review and approval by the FPNA Board, will submit proposed work plans, planting plans, and requests for improvements to the City of Greensboro Parks & Recreation Department Program Support Supervisor. The Program Support Supervisor will review these submittals and may grant approval for any work that does not require a COA, which may include removal of dead and declining plants, including trees under 4" dbh (this means diameter at breast height, which is measured at 4.5' above the ground), removal of living invasive plants, including trees under 4" dbh, minor repairs to steps and bridges, and new plantings in accordance with the Master Plan and this document. The Program Support Supervisor will confirm the scope of approved work in writing back to FPNA, and send a copy of the approval to the City of Greensboro Historic District Program staff.

- The FPNA Park Committee chairperson will consult with Parks & Recreation Department and Historic District Program staff regarding work proposed by FPNA that may require a COA, based on the *Historic District Program Manual and Design Guidelines* provisions pertaining to the *Neighborhood Setting*. A specific COA is required for significant changes to existing park conditions such as new or altered site features, and for removal of any tree over 4" dbh. When a COA is required, the Parks & Recreation Department will submit the application to the Historic District Program staff, who will determine whether the COA can be issued at the staff level or whether approval by the Historic Preservation Commission is necessary.
- Special projects proposed by individuals or other organizations, such as changes to playground equipment, addition or removal or significant changes to hardscape or landscape features, addition or removal or significant changes to lighting or signs, or public construction in or affecting the park, will be reviewed by the FPNA Park Committee and Board for input and recommendation before City approval is granted.
- When there is an immediate hazard in the park, the Parks & Recreation Department may submit a COA application to the Historic District Program staff without review or input by FPNA.
- Historic District Program staff will provide copies of approved COA's to the Parks & Recreation Department and the FPNA Park Committee chairperson.

This Landscape Management Policy and Procedures for Fisher Park dated January 2009, has been approved, reviewed, and acknowledged as follows:

Approved by the City of Greensboro:

Brooks Mullane, Program Support Supervisor, Parks & Recreation Department

Mike Cusimano, Urban Forester, Planning Department

David Phlegar, Stormwater Management Division, Water Resources Department

Mike Cowhig, Historic District Program, Housing & Community Development Department

Reviewed by: Chip Callaway, Landscape Architect

Acknowledged by Fisher Park Neighborhood Association, Inc.:

John McLendon, President, on behalf of the Board of Directors

List of Recommended Native Plants and Cultivars

This list is from the Master Plan for Fisher Park, with several revisions approved by the landscape architect (scientific and common names are listed for each plant).

Trees

Acer sp.	Maple (Red, Sugar, Swamp)
Aesculus pavia	Red Buckeye
Amelanchier arborea	Serviceberry
Betula nigra	River Birch
Carpinus caroliniana	Ironwood
Cercis canadensis	Redbud
Chionanthus sp.	Fringe Tree
Cladrastis kentukea	American Yellowwood
Cornus florida	Dogwood
Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
Fraxinus americana	White Ash
Ilex opaca	American Holly
Magnolia macrophylla, tripetala	Umbrella Tree
Magnolia virginiana	Sweet Bay Magnolia
Nyssa sylvatica	Black Gum
Oxydendrum arboreum	Sourwood
Pinckneya pubens	Feverbark
Prunus sp.	Cherry
Quercus sp.	Oaks
Sassafras albidum	Sassafras
Taxodium distichum	Bald Cypress
Ulmus Americana	American Elm (resistant cultivars)

Shrubs

Amelanchier sp.	Shadbush
Asimina triloba	Pawpaw
Callicarpa americana	Beautyberry
Calycanthus floridus	Sweet Shrub
Clethra alnifolia	Summersweet
Euonymus americanus	Hearts a Bustin
Fothergilla major	Witch Alder
Hamamelis virginiana	Witch Hazel
Hydrangea sp.	Hydrangea
Ilex verticillata	Winterberry (Deciduous Holly)
Illicium floridanum	Florida Anise
Itea virginica	Virginia Sweetspire
Kalmia latifolia	Mountain Laurel
Leucothoe populifolia	Dog Hobble
Lindera benzoin	Spice Bush
Rhododendron sp.	Native Azalea & Rhododendron
Stewartia pseudocamellia	Stewartia
Styrax americana	Styrax
Vaccinium arboreum	Sparkleberry
Viburnum sp.	Viburnum
Xanthorrhiza simplicissima	Yellowroot

List of Other Appropriate Plants

Certain non-invasive exotic species (specimen plants, antique plants and flowering perennials) may be planted and maintained in the park for interest, effect and seasonal color. Appropriate plants include the following:

Specimen Plants

Abelia
Acuba
Azalea
Butterfly Bush
Cherry
Dawn Redwood
Ginkgo
Japanese Maple
Stewartia

Antique Plants

Breath of Spring
Camellia
Spanish Needle
Quince

Flowering Perennials

Aster
Black-Eyed Susan
Christmas Rose
Clump Liriope
Daylily
Purple Coneflower

List of Invasive Plants

The invasive exotic species listed below are currently known to exist in Fisher Park (scientific and common names are listed for each plant).

Trees

Ailanthus altissima	Tree of Heaven
Albizia julibrissin	Mimosa
Melia azedarach	Chinaberry
Paulownia tomentosa	Princess Tree

Shrubs

Eleangus umbellata	Autumn Olive
Eleangus angustifolia	Russian Olive
Ligustrum japonicum	Japanese Privet (glossy leaf Ligustrum)
Ligustrum sinense	Chinese Privet
Lonicera maackii	Amur Bush Honeysuckle
Lonicera morrowii	Morrow's Bush Honeysuckle
Rosa multiflora	Multiflora Rose

Vines

Ampelopsis brevipedunculata	Porcelain-berry
Hedera helix	English Ivy
Lonicera japonica	Japanese Honeysuckle
Vinca major	Bigleaf Periwinkle
Vinca minor	Common Periwinkle
Wisteria floribunda	Japanese Wisteria
Wisteria sinensis	Chinese Wisteria

For more extensive listings and descriptions of invasive species occurring in North Carolina, see the website links at the end of the Greensboro Parks & Recreation Department Invasive Plant Policy, and also the following website of North Carolina Cooperative Extension (NC State University and NC A&T State University): www.ncsu.edu/goingnative

For additional information regarding planting with native species to attract and encourage birds, butterflies and other desirable wildlife, the following publications can be found through the North Carolina Cooperative Extension website listed above:

Managing Urban Habitats for Birds – www.ncsu.edu/goingnative/aq636_01.pdf

Butterflies in Your Backyard – www.ncsu.edu/goingnative/aq636_02.pdf

Landscaping for Wildlife with Native Plants – www.ncsu.edu/goingnative/aq636_03.pdf

	GREENSBORO PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT		
	Policy Manual		
Invasive Plant Policy			
Number: PR-P30	Revision:	Effective Date: 2/13/08	Pages: 2

Policy

The City of Greensboro shall exercise its responsibility as the environmental steward of the natural resources that it is charged to manage, oversee, protect and preserve by curbing the use and distribution of harmful invasive plant species, and by managing, with the goal of eradication, those invasive plant species already present on City managed land such as parks, gardens, open spaces, natural areas and greenways.

Definitions

1. **Native plant** – the federal Plant Conservation Alliance defines a native plant species as one that occurs naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, and/or habitat without direct or indirect human intervention. Sometimes called an indigenous plant, native plants are widely and effectively used and promoted by the landscape and horticulture sectors of the North Carolina green industry.
2. **Invasive plant** – a plant that causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. These are plants that are harmful or threatening to our parks, gardens, open spaces, natural areas and greenways. Invasive plants spread into disturbed areas, riparian buffers and natural areas. They can damage forests, shade out shrubs and wildflowers, reduce food and habitat for wildlife, compete and replace rare and endangered species, and interfere with outdoor recreation by crowding out the diverse and healthy mix of plants and wildlife that we want to preserve.
3. **Exotic plant** – a plant species that occurs artificially in locations beyond its known historical range. Sometimes called an alien or introduced plant. Most of these plants are not invasive and provide many benefits to urban landscapes, including beauty, sentimental and/or historic value, economic value to homes and businesses, and environmental benefits such as shade/heat reduction, pollution reduction, soil stabilization and conservation, storm water management, and food and nectar sources for wildlife.

Procedure

1. The City will not plant or distribute known invasive plants and it will manage these holdings on City managed property as resources allow.
2. The City will facilitate, lead, coordinate and evaluate educational programs on invasive plants for City staff, volunteers, park neighborhood associations, and others and encourage all

relevant City departments to participate in on-going training programs on invasive plant species and eradication techniques.

3. The City will develop partnerships in our area with surrounding governments, nongovernmental agencies, organizations, and volunteers to develop a coordinated and consistent approach to managing invasive species and promoting public education.
4. The City will use and encourage others to use non-invasive alternative plants, which include native plants that are adapted to local water and soil conditions.
5. The City will use a variety of strategies in the management of invasive plant species including but not limited to the following:
 - a. The City will use existing staff resources and seek outside funding to manage, with the goal of eradicating, invasive species from public lands. The City will facilitate eradication workdays in partnership with other area organizations and solicit the help of volunteers to remove invasive plants. The City will lead and fund (subject to budgetary considerations) the development of environmentally sound methods to control harmful invasive plant species on our public lands and promote their control on adjacent private lands.
 - b. The City will coordinate and facilitate collaboration in databases, early warning systems, monitoring, and other means of preventing invasive plant species problems.
 - c. The City will promote the use of non-invasive alternative plants, both native and non-native, within all government units and to the public.
 - d. The City will develop partnerships to assist in the invasive plant species management program and to provide non-invasive restoration materials.
 - e. The City will develop and provide a forum for regular evaluation of the effectiveness of this invasive plant species program.

References

Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Government at www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives
National Park Service at www.nps.gov/plants/alien
The Nature Conservancy at www.nature.org/initiatives/invasivespecies
North Carolina Wildflower Association at www.ncwildflower.org
Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere at www.samab.org
Southeast Plant Pest Council www.se-eppc.org/northcarolina, [HTTP://WWW.INVASIVE.ORG/EASTERN/](http://WWW.INVASIVE.ORG/EASTERN/)
The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program at www.ncnhp.org