

## **Forest Hill Park Trail Redevelopment Plan**

### **Project Overview**

Forest Hill Park has been a regional destination since its dedication as a park in the mid 1900's. Today the park boasts a great mix of human and natural history, cultural attractions, and adventure recreation along the ancestral banks of Reedy Creek.

Recognizing the great benefits this park brings to the surrounding neighborhoods, the city and the region a renaissance has began. This refocusing of attention on this wonderful resource has been lead by the City of Richmond Parks and Recreation Department, the Friends of the Park, the Community and various volunteer groups. The resurgence of Forest Hill Park is demonstrated in the improvements made to the Stone House, the restoration of Reedy Creek Lake and the establishment of a popular Farmers Market. Thus leaving the recreational single track trails in the park as the last major facility in need of re-development.

The trail system that is currently in Forest Hill Park was built in 2004-2005 by well meaning volunteers with very limited oversight, resources, and understanding of sustainable trail design. The trails current alignment has resulted in three and half miles of poorly designed trail that caters to one user group and causes both environmental degradation and user conflict.

In 2008 the Parks and Recreation Department put forth a redevelopment proposal that was endorsed by the Friends of Forest Hill Park, the Richmond Area Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiast and The Patrick Henry School of Science and Art. Acting on this redevelopment plan a Memorandum of Understanding was developed with the school and a completely volunteer driven effort was started resulting in 375 feet of trail being redeveloped and 410 feet of unsustainable trail being reclaimed.

While this type of volunteer undertaking is doable it comes at a great cost to the enthusiasm of the volunteer core and a significant time investment in the five to six year range. Recognizing these constraints it is being proposed that we look at bringing in a trail professional to assist with new trail development and reclamation work on the old trail corridors - thus allowing the volunteer effort to be put towards finalizing new trail, old trail reclamation, rock work, and bridge development.

This proposal will cost an estimated \$14,000. Over \$9,000 of the needed funds will be raised by private donations and various stakeholder organizations. These funds will cover the cost of the trail professional (\$115 per. Hr. for 40 hrs. = \$4,600) and native/rare trees and shrubs for reclaiming the old trails. The remaining \$5,000 will be used for the construction of bridges and railings around the pipe over Reedy Creek to be paid for by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Moving forward with the redevelopment of the Forest Hill Park Trail System in this manner will allow us to have a completely sustainable trail system around the park, mitigate user conflict between recreational trail users and families/individuals walking around the lake, and serve a much broader swath of our community. This project would potentially start in December and would be completed by late spring of 2010.

## Goals of Project

1. Create an environmentally, socially, and managerially sustainable loop system around Forest Hill park.
2. Develop a dual directional, multi-use trail system that is easily connected to trails in the James River Park System.
3. Close, mitigate erosion and reclaim old unsustainable trail corridors with native/ rare vegetation.

## Scope of Project

- **Trail Development:**

1. **New Trail Construction-** This will be done with the assistance of the paid trail professional constructing approximately one mile of new trail. Parks and Recreation trail staff will oversee trail design/layout, corridor clearing, and assist with construction.
2. **Bridges** – Two new bridges will need to be constructed to realign the trails. One on the western side of the park over the spring off of 42<sup>nd</sup> street and the other over the spring that enters Reedy Creek just North of the spillway on the Eastern side of the park. In addition to this there will need to be railings added to pipe that crosses over Reedy Creek North of the spillway. This work will be carried out by certified contractors from Richmond MORE.
3. **Rock work-** Rock work is necessary in a number of areas along the trail system. This work entails building small crib walls, trail hardening and construction one rolling crown switch back. All rock work will be carried out by Richmond MORE in conjunction with Parks and Recreation trail staff.

- **Trail Reclamation:**

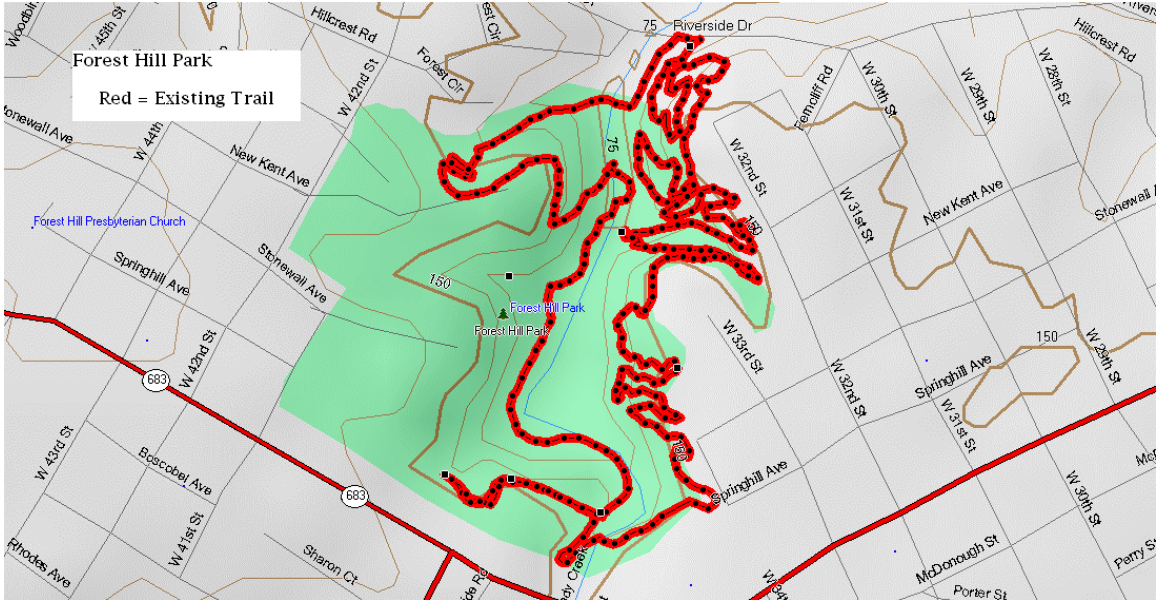
1. **Reclamation work-** This will consist of aerating the closed trail corridor to loosen compaction, returning old trail to side hill in character with the rest of the hill to insure proper sheet flow across the land and the planting of native/rare vegetation to brake up site of old trail corridor and replace lost vegetation. This work will be carried out by Friends of Forest Hill Park, Forest Hill Civic Association, Reedy Creek Coalition, Richmond MORE, and various other volunteer organizations in conjunction with Parks and Recreation trail staff and paid trail professional.

## **Project Time Line**

- **November:**
  1. Finish trail layout and mapping
  2. Submit proposal to stake holders
  3. Begin fundraising efforts
- **December:**
  1. Walk through new trail corridor with stake holders
  2. Begin corridor clearing
  3. Continue/ finalize fundraising efforts
- **Mid January thru April**
  1. Begin new trail development and reclamation work
  2. Begin bridge construction
  3. Finish trail reclamation and new trail development

# Forest Hill Park Maps

## Current trail system



## Proposed Trail System

