



## TOWN OF WARRENTON

Community Development Department

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To: Planning Commission  
From: Denise M. Harris, AICP  
Date: January 12, 2021  
Re: Eva Walker Park Master Plan

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### BACKGROUND

The Eva Walker Park Master Plan began in 2020 with the award of a PATH Foundation grant for \$22,000 to match the Town's allocation of \$22,000. A contract was awarded to Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc (RHI), a nationally recognized planning and landscape architecture firm, to develop the long term concepts for the park. The project was further enhanced with an AARP Community Challenge grant of \$19,000 to implement an Eva Walker Commemorative Garden with an interpretive panel and benches. This work was done in conjunction with the development of the master plan with the contributions of Plan+Place.

### SCOPE OF WORK

Town staff worked with RHI and an Advisory Group to guide the development of this project. Existing conditions were established, three initial design concepts were created that were narrowed down over the course of the project, and public outreach was conducted. In addition, the Town Council and Planning Commission held work sessions on the ongoing efforts. The family and friends of Eva Walker helped in the design and development of the commemorative garden.

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

As part of the master plan development, the community was invited to provide input. A community workshop was held outside at the park on September 26, 2020. Neighbors were invited through door hangers, social media posts, and the Town website. The Town of Warrenton Town Crier, which is mailed to every resident, invited the community to the workshop as well. The local media covered the event. Following this a community survey was posted online for people who could not attend the workshop. A second community workshop was held November 12, 2020 virtually, which was advertised in a similar fashion as the first one, followed once again by a second survey.

### ADVISORY GROUP

The Advisory Group, made up of stakeholders and Town staff, met four times throughout the project. This group included representatives from the First Baptist Church, the Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County, Fauquier Habitat for Humanity, PATH Foundation, and family of Eva

Walker. The Advisory Group helped advertise the community workshops and surveys; provided background information; and helped guide the overall master plan.

## MASTER PLAN

The Eva Walker Park Master Plan seeks to balance the passive and active recreational desires of the community while preserving as many trees and the natural topography as possible. Highlighted features include:

- A second basketball court is added to the current one (the only public, outdoor basketball court in the county).
- A natural playground; would be the only one in the Town to date.
- A second pavilion added near the Haiti Street entrance to encourage additional gathering spots.
- A natural amphitheater to allow for individual gatherings, picnics, exercise, or a seating area for events.
- A multi-use platform at the base of the amphitheater potentially used seasonally for events, a splash pad, and/or ice skating. Or it may simply have tables and chairs for people to relax.
- A central park area surrounded by a trail system for informal pickup games, displays like an Art Walk, or event space.
- Commemorative Garden to honor the legacy of Eva Walker and provides the historical background of the park, leading into a perennial garden walk.
- A grand staircase entrance off Horner Street with curving slides to better utilize the public parking lot, preserve the historical sledding hill, and introduce a bit of fun.
- Enhanced entrances, parking, and landscaping.

## EVA WALKER COMMEMORATIVE GARDEN

The commemorative garden is a collaborative effort to honor the legacy of the park and the woman it is named after. Metal artwork panels are designed by Eva Walker's granddaughter, Ashleigh Corrin Webb, to capture Ms. Walker's spirit. An interpretative panel's text is being written by Robyn Thompson, Eva Walker's daughter, and Christine Lewis, Eva Walker's friend and member of the Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County.

## IMPLEMENTATION

This master plan provides concepts for the future. While further investments and phasing will be necessary to fully realize the park's potential, the master plan's unified vision allows for the community to move forward to next steps of implementation.