



The Virginia-Highland

VOICE

Winter 2008

Orme Park: Master Plan Takes Shape

by: Jack White

The two-year conceptual design process for Orme Park's Master Plan has ended. Both VHCA and NPU-F approved the park's Conceptual Master Plan at their December meetings, and the Orme Park Committee now turns its attention to the more formidable and long-range challenge of raising funds for site-specific drawings and construction.

Major thematic elements of the park will be unchanged. Protecting and enhancing the park's trees and riparian corridor will still be emphasized, along with removal of invasive plants and restoration of native plant species.

The north side of the park will continue to feature playground equipment and open space for small-scale gatherings and informal recreation, but equipment will be relocated and entry points re-evaluated. The Brookridge Drive bridge and existing stairs on both sides of it will be restored in a yet unspecified fashion. The bridge in its original state had a certain grandeur that has disappeared with the decades.

The park's south side will remain sylvan. Boardwalks will be added in some areas, and the trail will be more defined than others, but the area's role as an arboreal retreat will endure. The privet and elaeagnus that dominate the understory and the steep banks under Elmwood Drive will be eradicated and slowly replaced with native plants:

Stream restoration is also a primary goal of the plan, but the process is both expensive and disruptive and will likely await another opportunity such as sewer repair, a tree coming down, or some other similar event.

The plans, developed in conjunction with Park Pride, can be viewed in more detail at www.vahi.org. Committee contact information can also be found on the website if you wish to provide input.