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URBAN DESIGN

317 North Court Avenue  
Tucson, Arizona 85701

## **Historic Fort Lowell Park: Master Plan and Restoration Plan**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Introduction**

The following is in partial fulfillment of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Pima County and the City of Tucson, for the Rehabilitation, Restoration and Management of the “Adkins Parcel” at Historic Fort Lowell (contract No. 01-73-T-139256-0307 of 2007).

The IGA instructed that a Master Plan be developed for the Adkins parcel, into which the Restoration Plan for the Adkins Parcel would fit. In 2007, Pima County contracted Poster Frost Associates (PFA) to conduct this master plan study as a tool for treating the Fort Lowell historic resources.

Early in the planning process, it was recognized that arriving at a Master Plan for the Adkins Parcel (5.5 acres), required understanding the entire 70-acre Fort Lowell Park. Under a contract amendment, the scope was expanded to include a more comprehensive Master Plan, which permitted careful study of all the parks resources to ensure the Adkins Parcel Restoration Plan would properly fit within the larger context of the entire park.

The IGA directed the creation of a Fort Lowell Restoration Advisory Committee to assist in the development of the plans, and their committed involvement has been critical to the process. The IGA also stipulated that the City and County would need to approve both the Master Plan and the Restoration Plan before the County moved forward to implement work on the Adkins Parcel portion of the project. Implementation of the Restoration Plan for the Adkins Parcel will represent the first “piece” of the re-defined Historic Fort Lowell Park.

### **1. Master Planning**

#### **Process** (see flow-chart)

A comprehensive 13-month planning process was used to achieve a Final Conceptual Master Plan with a broad consensus of support from a variety of users, administrators, neighbors, preservationists, and other stakeholders. The principal institutional project participants include:

Pima County (Office of Cultural Resources & Historic Preservation)

City of Tucson (Parks and Recreation Department)

#### **MASTER PLAN CONTENT SUMMARY**

Fort Lowell Restoration Advisory Committee (FLRAC)  
Fort Lowell Historic Zone Advisory Board  
Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association  
Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission  
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

The FLRAC provided comprehensive guidance and leadership through monthly meetings. Additionally, between June 2008 and February 2009, there was an Adjacent-Neighborhoods Visioning Workshop as a project kick-off followed by three well-attended Public Meetings. These public meetings were held to receive input at different stages of the Master Plan. Focus groups were held with a group of students from a public elementary school and a local Boy Scout Troop to collect input from a future generation of Park users. Meetings were held with the organized athletic and recreation users (Fort Lowell Little League and Soccer clubs and aquatic and tennis users.) Finally, consultation with nine American Indian Tribes was initiated and will continue as the planning is completed and the Master Plan moves to implementation.

The project participation process was extensive and was marked by a series of milestone meetings:

- Adjacent Neighborhoods' Visioning Workshop, June 25, 2008
- Background Report, Meeting #1, September 3, 2008
- Three Alternative Concept Plans, Meeting #2, November 19, 2008
- Draft Preferred Concept Plan, Meeting #3, February 18, 2009

The Draft Preferred Concept Plan was then evaluated through a series of historic reviews from March - June 2009, including:

- The Fort Lowell Historic Zone Advisory Board
- State Historic Preservation Officer
- Tucson-Pima County Historic Commission

The final work products consisted of three different documents:

- Background Report
- Master Plan (including Feasibility Study and Business Plan)
- Adkins Parcel Restoration Plan

Final reviews of the projects include reviews by City and County staff, City of Tucson Mayor and City Council, Pima County Board of Supervisors review and approval, June - August 2009

## **Master Plan: Final Concept Plan Overview**

The *Historic Fort Lowell Park Master Plan and Restoration Plan* will guide the rehabilitation, preservation, enhancement, development, and operations of Historic Fort Lowell Park, Tucson Arizona. The *Master Plan* is intended to have a 15-year plan horizon with a recommended update at five and ten years out. The last comprehensive Master Plan in for the site was completed in 1985. This Master Plan was precipitated by the City of Tucson acquisition of the fragile historic Adkins parcel, with assistance from

### **MASTER PLAN CONTENT SUMMARY**

Pima County. The acquisition joins the Commissary parcel, the Hardy parcel, and the greater Fort Lowell Park site to make an approximately 70-acre regional park.

### **Project Goals**

1. Protect important natural and cultural resources.
2. Reveal all of the stories and the layers of history that define Fort Lowell Park.
3. Provide park experiences for a variety of age and interest groups.
4. Respect the relationship between Fort Lowell Park and surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Establish good park access and connectivity to surrounding sites and amenities.

### **Project Guidelines**

1. Balance historic and recreational uses within the park. In the context of the site constraints, increase the quality of recreation facilities, not the quantity.
2. Tell all stories of the people of Fort Lowell Park but give priority to the Fort era. Define the spatial character of the Fort and the Parade Grounds..
3. Use rehabilitation, preservation, adaptive re-use, restoration and reconstruction as appropriate, in that order of priority. Be creative.
4. Cross Craycroft safely at grade. Improve parking and circulation. Strengthen neighborhood/regional connectivity.
5. Balance recreational, cultural and natural landscapes.
6. Keep main phase capital costs in the \$5 - \$10 million range. Additional capital costs should be put off to future phases. In this environment of limited public budget resources, keep management, operational and maintenance costs modest.

### **Master Plan Structure: Creation of Discreet Zones**

Overall, the 70-acre Fort Lowell site is complex, and are grouped into functional zones of similar activities.

#### ***Zone 1 – Fort Lowell Historic Zone***

This zone encompasses the buildings grouped around the historic Fort Lowell Parade Grounds and stretches across both sides of North Craycroft Road. The goal of the design approach is to define the spatial character of Fort Lowell as it appeared between 1873 and 1891 by using historic buildings and building ruins, new buildings on historic footprints, new “ghosted” frames re-visioning historic buildings, landscape features, and interpretive elements.

- Buildings and resources remaining from the Fort era, including Officers’ Quarters #1, #2, and #3 at the Adkins parcel are preserved and rehabilitated. The ruins of Officers’ Quarters #1 and #2 are protected by a roof that defines its original building shape. Officers’ Quarters #3 is rehabilitated to its 1880 form and will be open for visits.
- A new cottonwood alley on its historic axis will be replanted. Historic picket fences will be re-placed.
- The Commissary Building is preserved as rehabilitated by the Bolsius family, but the number of residential units are reduced to bring it in line with current HR-1 zoning and to allow public access to the historic rooms. A gift shop and bookstore may be added. Some group activities may take place in the Commissary patio.
- A new ramada building is built on the footprint of the Adjutants Office and will serve as an orientation pavilion to welcome visitors to the site.

### **MASTER PLAN CONTENT SUMMARY**

- In Craycroft Road, the footprints of Commanding Officers' Quarters (#4) and the Cavalry Band Quarters will be carved into the Craycroft asphalt. A new HAWK pedestrian crossing will be aligned on the cottonwood alley.
- On the east side of Craycroft, the Commanding Officer's Quarters (counted as Officer's Quarters #4) was reconstructed in 1963 in roughly the same place as the original Officer's Quarter #5. This structure is currently used by the Arizona Historical Society Museum. It should be noted that the Museum, reconstructed in 1963, was constructed 30 feet north of its proper alignment, but will remain in its current location to recognize, interpret, and celebrate Tucson's earliest preservation efforts. This building will remain a museum with limited hours of use until a new museum is built east of the eastern edge of the Parade Grounds. Once the museum has been relocated, the future of this building should be re-evaluated.
- Officers Quarters #6 and #7 will be memorialized as steel family ramadas mimicking the size and form of the original buildings. The western-most Barracks Building on the north side of the Parade Grounds will be similarly treated.
- The Hospital Building will be preserved and roof-protected but with the use of contemporary materials to define the extent and shape of the much-larger original hospital.
- The Barracks Building on the area east of the Parade Grounds are framed to mimic the size and form of the original buildings, with their exact function yet to be determined.
- The Donaldson House will be adaptively re-used as a community meeting space (with very limited parking as is) and a community garden.

### ***Zone 2 – Organized Sports Fields Zone***

This zone consolidates the sports fields now scattered around the Fort Lowell site, improving the quality, orientation, lighting and access of these fields. This zone includes:

- Four championship-quality, lighted soccer fields
- Two championship-quality, lighted Little League fields
- One championship-quality full-size lighted baseball field, reoriented to the proper direction
- The corner of Craycroft and Glenn is highlighted as a park gateway with a corner pedestrian plaza and the possible relocation of the Chief Trumpeter statue to this highly visible location.
- Additional and improved on-street parking is provided along Glenn Street for users of these sports fields.

### ***Zone 3 – Swimming, Tennis, and Active Recreation Zone***

This zone houses the more active recreation programs including:

- Improved tennis and pool facilities that allow for the current high rate of use for a variety of user groups. A new pool house and a renovated existing pool house will improve the aquatic facilities. A snack bar, restrooms, and shaded bleachers will serve both swimming and tennis.
- Improved and increased parking with enhanced landscape and an internal loop road
- Upgraded fitness areas with a variety of options serving a variety of users and age groups.
- The pond will remain and be enhanced with additional trails and vegetation.

## **MASTER PLAN CONTENT SUMMARY**

- A full circuit multi-use asphalt trail will provide a one-mile loop around the park

***Zone 4 – Pantano Wash Natural Area and Native American Interpretation***

This zone is the location of the natural areas of the site and includes the following:

- The natural resource areas along the Pantano Wash are protected and enhanced
- Environmental education programs are proposed to be run out of the current maintenance building in possible partnership with the Tucson Audubon Society.
- Other environmental education will be developed through enhanced signage, interpretive trails, dedicated classroom space, and programs focusing on sustainability and habitat restoration.
- Improved interpretation of Hohokam lifeways through new signage and archaeological exhibits.
- The pecan grove dating to 1940's will be restored.

**2. Restoration Plan (for Adkins Parcels)**

This represents the first portion being implemented under the Fort Lowell Park Master Plan, and utilizes approximately \$1.2 million remaining from the 2004 County Bond. The Adkins Parcels form one side of ***Zone 1 – Fort Lowell Historic Zone***, as outlined above. Specifically, the treatments of Adkins Parcels resources are recommended as follows, subject to further study and acceptance by project participants:

Officers' Quarters #1

- Preserve as a ruin and add a protective structure that defines the original shape and volume.

Officers' Quarters #2

- Preserve as a ruin and add a protective structure that defines the original shape and volume.

Officers' Quarters #3

- Will be rehabilitated to its 1880 (fort-era) form and will be open for visits.
- A new cottonwood alley on its historic axis will be replanted
- Historic picket fences will be re-placed
- A new Ramada building is built on the footprint of the Adjutants Office and will serve as an orientation pavilion to welcome visitors to the site. This structure will define the original shape and volume of the historic building
- The 1934 Adkins Residence to be stabilized to allow for future decision once Master Plan is partially implemented
- The partially collapsed residence located west of the fabrication shed will be removed

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- The ca.1940s Steel Fabrication Shed will be removed
- A new parking area to provide access to the western portion of the Park
- Selective landscaping
- Interpretive signs showing items of interest

### **Phasing and Costs**

The project will be executed in three phases:

- Phase 1 (\$1.2 million, 2009-2011): Restoration of the Adkins parcel buildings including work on Officers Quarters #1, #2 and #3.
- Phase 2 (\$12 million, 2011-2013): All elements of the Master Plan except those elements in Phase 1 and 3.
- Phase 3 (\$3.2 million, 2016-2017): a new 6000 square foot historical museum south and west of the pond.