

Proposal

**Equestrian Facilities
for Fairfax County Residents
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Submitted by: Fairfax4Horses

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Mission of Fairfax4Horses

The mission of Fairfax4Horses, a County-wide group of concerned citizens and affiliated groups, is to promote the development of public lesson facilities for adults, children, therapeutic riding, and boarding facilities on Fairfax County parkland. Fairfax4Horses can be distinguished from other equestrian groups by its focus on obtaining facilities for County residents who do not own a horse.

Introduction

Fairfax4Horses requests that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors include the development of public equestrian lesson and boarding facilities in any planned use of existing County parkland and any new acreage suitable for recreational purposes made possible through future purchase. The preliminary equestrian facilities proposed here address the need for recreational equestrian activities that are easily accessible to all interested participants in various geographic regions of the County. A public-private partnership would allow Fairfax County to benefit from the knowledge and experience of Fairfax4Horses members in the funding, actual design and construction, and subsequent operation of the facilities.

Need

Preservation and protection of open space for stables, fields, trails, and equestrian activity provides an improved quality of life for all residents of Fairfax County. Equestrian activities benefit the community by nurturing children to become focused, accomplished, and positive in their outlook toward life. Additionally, equestrian activities provide adults a relaxing yet challenging and social recreational activity to balance the stress that many adults find in the workplace. Horses also play an important role in Virginia's history and serve as a tangible connection to its past and its future.

Public equestrian facilities on County parkland are needed now more than ever due to the continuing loss of open space, as well as the closure of two of the three major recreational horseback riding facilities in Fairfax County open to the public- Great Falls Horse Center and Bay Ridge Stables- which together provided over 1,000 lesson hours per

week. As a result of the diminishing number of lesson facilities, most of Fairfax County residents who do not own a horse and do not have access to a privately-owned horse must now travel to neighboring Virginia and Maryland counties in order to take lessons. The few remaining private facilities in the County have long waiting lists and are unable to help satisfy the continuing demand for riding lessons, particularly in the northern and western sections of the County.

The closure of lesson facilities is not an indication of a decrease in the public's interest in riding in Fairfax County. Rather, Great Falls Horse Center and Bay Ridge Stables, as well as many smaller facilities, have succumbed to the advances of developers who have paid large sums of money to acquire tracts of land that are attractive for housing developments and shopping centers. As evidence of the continuing desire for equestrian facilities in the County, Fairfax4Horses currently has the signatures of over 850 County residents who would like to see public lesson facilities in or near their communities, and its e-mail list to date tallies nearly 350 names.

Attachment "A" lists the remaining lesson facilities in Fairfax County, as well as those facilities lost over the past ten years.

Therapeutic Riding

In addition to riding lessons for the general public, there is a need for facilities to handle the two therapeutic riding programs in Fairfax County. Currently, these programs, that have been serving citizens with disabilities for over 25 years, are located on private farms with no guarantee of the future. Over 100 riders participate, yet there continues to be an active, two-year waiting list of over 50 riders. The inclusive nature of therapeutic riding provides the foundation for a variety of community programs:

- (a) Educational and therapeutic opportunities for youth at risk,
- (b) Exercise and restoration for adult riders with multiple sclerosis,
- ©) Therapy and socialization for children with multiple disabilities,
- (d) Community service opportunities for high school youth, and
- (e) A natural setting for healing within families.

Availability

Land already owned by Fairfax County is available to site the facilities recommended in this Proposal, including: (a) the 1,800-acre Hunter-Hacor Assemblage (Braddock and Pleasant Valley Road area) in Centreville, and (b) the 2,300-acre Laurel Hill (formerly Lorton) property in the southern part of the County. These properties allow for 50 to 250 acres for equestrian facility development without diminishing opportunities for other recreational activities. In order to serve all Fairfax County residents, other properties in the northern part of the County, including land already owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority, as well as private property near of adjacent to Fairfax County parkland, should be considered for smaller equestrian facilities. Strategically locating facilities in three separate sections of the County will give residents access to public lesson facilities and minimize their need to drive long distances.

Focus

Fairfax4Horses proposes the following equestrian facilities to address the need for horseback riding lessons and boarding across the County:

- West - One large facility located on the Hunter-Hacor Assemblage property in Centreville, to provide 400-600 lessons per week;
- South - One large facility located on the Laurel Hill (formerly Lorton) property to provide 400-600 lessons per week; and
- North - One or more smaller facilities, on land to be identified, to provide 200-250 lessons per week.

All facilities would be self-sustaining and economically viable.

Please see Attachments B and C to this Proposal for a description of the type of facilities and usage proposed. Fairfax4Horses also proposes that therapeutic riding facilities be included in plans for any large riding facilities within the County.

The development of these facilities would go a long way toward meeting the demand for riding in Fairfax County and retain our heritage as horse country, as well as contribute to the economic growth of the County.

Public-Private Partnership

Fairfax4Horses is proposing a community (public-private) partnership to accomplish the goals set forth in this Proposal. Fairfax4Horses anticipates that its participation in the partnership will be to help the County to:

- (a) Designate parkland currently owned by the County that would be suitable for equestrian facilities;
- (b) Identify new land adjacent to County-owned land that is or may become available for purchase by the County;
- (c) Design equestrian facilities to meet current and reasonably expected future demands for lessons and boarding;
- (d) Oversee the construction of physical facilities; and
- (e) Provide for ongoing operation maintenance and preservation of the facilities.

Funding for construction would be provided by a combination of donations (including those for therapeutic riding) and public-private partnerships. In the latter case, a private organization might build the facility and run it through a long-term lease arrangement with the County. Revenues generated by the equestrian facilities would offset the costs of ongoing maintenance and future development. Fairfax4Horses will continue its goal of encouraging the creation and maintenance of riding facilities that will be accessible to residents throughout the County.

Conclusion

With its large population and diverse recreational interests, Fairfax County is able to provide a wide range of opportunities for both adults and children. However, there is a significant unmet need for public riding lesson facilities for County residents who do not own a horse, as well as, a permanent home for the County's therapeutic riding programs and boarding opportunities for County residents who do own horses. Fairfax4Horses has identified this need and proposes to work with the County to add this capability to the County's current range of recreational options.

The rolling hills of Fairfax County and the horses that live on them are an important part of our State and local histories. Creating permanent, affordable, accessible riding and boarding facilities will ensure that this part of our heritage will not be lost.



Attachment A: Status of equestrian facilities as of October 2002

Equestrian Lesson Facilities in Fairfax County currently open

- Angelica Run Stable: 1927 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna.
 - ❖ Riding lessons available only to clients leasing horses.
- Battlefield Equestrian Center: 16009 Lee Highway, Centreville.
 - ❖ Riding lessons available only to clients leasing horses.
- Bull Run Equestrian Center: Old Bull Run Post Office Road, Centreville.
 - ❖ Dressage lessons on school or own horse (currently has a waiting list).
- Equestrian Enterprises: Great Falls.
 - ❖ Rentals for guided trail rides in Lake Fairfax Park and along the Potomac River.
- GEM Riding Academy: 10628 Hunters Valley Road, Vienna.
 - ❖ Riding lessons on school horses (5 horses provide 35-40 lessons/week).
 - ❖ Summer camps.
- Hay Down: Old Post Road, Great Falls.
 - ❖ Field boarding.
- Hylton Stables: Bull Run Post Office Road (next to Missing Maple), Fairfax.
 - ❖ Field boarding (10 horses).
- Missing Maple: Bull Run Post Office Road, Fairfax.
 - ❖ Boarding.
 - ❖ Breeding.
- Mulford School: 6101 Old Centreville Road, Centreville.
 - ❖ Riding lessons.
 - ❖ Preschool-kindergarten educational facility.
- Oliver Stables: 10810 Henderson Road, Fairfax Station.
 - ❖ Stall boarding (42 horse capacity) on 33 acres.
 - ❖ Indoor and outdoor rings.
- Shadybrook Stable: 1033 Bellview Road, McLean.
 - ❖ Riding lessons on school horses (small operation).
- Southdown Farm: 136 Commonage Drive, Great Falls.
 - ❖ Limited lessons for boarders only.
- Stonecrest Stables: 6512 Colchester Road, Fairfax Station.
- Stoneridge Farms: 10727 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls.
 - ❖ High-end riding lessons available to clients leasing or owning horses.
 - ❖ High-end boarding facility.
- Windswept Farm, Fairfax.
 - ❖ Full-care boarding.
- Woodlawn Stables: 8907 Richmond Highway, Alexandria.
 - ❖ Riding lessons.
 - ❖ Boarding (10 Horses).
 - ❖ Summer camp.
- Full Crest Farm: Fitzwater Road, Nokesville.
 - ❖ Boarding facility—boarders directed to find other stabling arrangements.
 - ❖ Property for sale.
- Greenway Stables: Arcola (Part of Shockey property).
- Greenwood Stables: Arcola (Part of Shockey property*).
 - ❖ Boarding.
 - ❖ Limited lessons available.
- Oakridge Stables: 12103 Nokesville Road, Bristow.
 - ❖ Lessons.
 - ❖ Limited boarding.

3500 acre property in Loudoun County; home to a number of boarding facilities. Sold to developers in 2002).

Attachment A continued: Status of equestrian facilities as of October 2002

Equestrian facilities in Fairfax and surrounding Counties closed or projected to close

Closing soon or reduced in size:

- Full Crest Farm: Fitzwater Road, Nokesville.
 - ❖ Boarding facility—boarders directed to find other stabling arrangements.
 - ❖ Property for sale.
- Greenway Stables: Arcola (Part of Shockey property).
- Greenwood Stables: Arcola (Part of Shockey property*).
 - ❖ Boarding.
 - ❖ Limited lessons available.
- Oakridge Stables: 12103 Nokesville Road, Bristow.
 - ❖ Lessons.
 - ❖ Limited boarding.
- Rokeby Stables: Route 123 near George Washington Parkway, Vienna.
 - ❖ Boarding facility.
 - ❖ 10 acres sold to developers in 2000.

Closed 2001-2002:

- Affinity Farm: Braddock Road near South Riding, Loudoun County. Closed summer 2002.
- Bay Ridge Equestrian Center: Centreville. Closed August 2002.
- Briary Farm Riding Academy: Alexandria.
- Century Oaks Farm, Gainsville.
- Great Falls Horse Center/Clover Hill: Arnon Chapel Road, Great Falls. Closed December 2001.
- Holly Hill Stables: Fairfax Station.
- Kadet Stables: Springfield.
- Tamarack Stables: Lorton.
- Willow Bend Farm: Centreville. Closed Fall 2002.
- Rosslyn Ridge: Lorton.

Closed between 1970 and 2001:

- The Commons Stable: Chainbridge Road and Anderson Road, McLean. Closed 1970.
 - ❖ Service(s): Boarding facility for approximately 80 horses.
 - ❖ Current use: Site of TRW office building.
- R & S Stables: Shreve Road. Closed 1971.
 - ❖ Service(s): Boarding facility for 30 horses.
- Bar J Stables: Gallows Road and Lee Highway, Merrifield. Closed 1973.
 - ❖ Service(s): Boarding facility for 40 horses.
 - ❖ Current use: Industrial park.
- Junior Equitation School: Clarks Crossing Road, Vienna.
 - ❖ Service(s): Boarding and lesson facility of 50 horses.
- The Caller Property and adjoining properties: adjacent to Junior Equitation School, Vienna.
 - ❖ Service(s): Boarding for 30 horses on 40 acres; multiple 2 and 3 horse estates.

3500 acre property in Loudoun County; home to a number of boarding facilities. Sold to developers in 2002).

Attachment A continued: Status of equestrian facilities as of October 2002

Closed between 1970 and 2001

- Beulah Road area: Vienna.
 - ❖ Original use: approximately 300 acres of open space available for equestrian activities.
 - ❖ Current use: site of Wolftrap, Yeonas, Shouse Property and Eudora Development.
- Reston region. Closed around 1980.
 - ❖ Service(s): Open space available for trail riding; large boarding facility.
 - ❖ Current use: Planned community.
- Reston Polo Field: Monroe and Fox Mill Road, Reston. Closed early 1990s.
 - ❖ Service(s): Boarding facility.
- Laural Ridge Farm: Lawyers Road, Vienna. Closed mid-1980s.
 - ❖ Service(s): boarding (20-30 horses) and small lesson facility.
- Little Run Farm: Hunter Mill Road near Reston Farm Petting Zoo, Reston. Closed early 1980s.
 - ❖ Service(s): Boarding facility (20 horses).
- Kidwell/Cockrill Property. Closed mid-late 1980s.
 - ❖ Original use: Equestrian farmland (142 acres).
- West Oak Stables: Oakton Road, Vienna. Closed 1998.
 - ❖ Service(s): boarding facility (20 horses)

Attachment B: Proposed equestrian facilities

Large Facilities

Purpose: Provide horseback riding lessons and horse boarding to Fairfax County residents with the development of two large equestrian facilities on Fairfax County Park Authority land.

Justification: Loss of available open space for riding facilities due to development.

Sites proposed:

- ▶ Hunter-Hacor Assemblage: 200-250 acres
- ▶ Laurel Hill: 200-250 acres

Scope of each:

- Number of Lesson Horses: 50
- Number of Lessons/Week: 400-600
- Number of Boarders: 30

Facilities for each:

- ❖ One 50-stall barn for lesson horses with tack room, feed room, wash stall, office and gentlemen's and ladies' bathrooms
- ❖ One 30-stall barn for boarders, including tack room, wash stall and one bathroom
- ❖ One hay storage barn (36' x 48')
- ❖ One large indoor arena (100' x 170') (for lessons)
- ❖ One small indoor arena (80' x 100') (for boarders)
- ❖ One large outdoor jumping ring (150' x 300') with lights (for lessons)
- ❖ One small outdoor jumping ring (80' x 100') with lights (for boarders)
- ❖ One outdoor dressage arena (96' x 227') with track and lights (for lessons and boarders)

Small Facilities

Purpose: Provide smaller, community-based equestrian facilities on Fairfax County Park Authority land to provide horseback riding lessons and boarding for residents in North County.

Site proposed:

- ▶ North County: 50-100 acres

Scope:

- Number of Lesson Horses: 20
- Number of Lessons/Week: 200-250
- Number of Boarders: 10

Facilities:

- ❖ One 30-stall barn for lesson and boarder horses, including tack room, feed room, wash-stall, office and gentlemen's and ladies' bathrooms
- ❖ One hay storage barn (36' x 48')
- ❖ One large indoor arena (100' x 170') (to be shared by lessons and boarders)
- ❖ One large outdoor jumping ring (150' x 300') with lights (for lessons and boarders)
- ❖ One outdoor dressage arena (96' x 227') with track and lights (for lessons and boarders)

Attachment C: Proposed services to the community

<p><u>Riding services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginner through advanced horsemanship lessons • Pony rides • Riding on trails • Therapeutic riding 	<p><u>Usage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boy and girl scout activities • Hay rides • Horse boarding • Pony Club activities • Summer camps • Therapeutic programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ At-risk youth programs ➤ Research and internships
<p><u>Age groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children • Teens and adolescents • Adults 	<p><u>Physical abilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unskilled riders • Experienced riders • Able-bodied riders • Riders with disabilities