

# **Washington Avenue Mall**

**Dave King**  
**Assistant Director Public Works**  
**City Arborist**

- Good Evening. My name is Dave King. I am the Asst Director of Public Works and the City Arborist.

# **Background**

**General Background**

**History**

**Design Principles**

**The Plan**

- Tonight we are going to take you through the background of our urban forest program; the history of trees on Washington Mall; and some design principles that were used to develop the plan. Finally, we will show you the resulting plan that came from that process.

# Definition of an Urban Forest:

**All publicly and privately owned trees within an urban area**



- I would first like to make sure everyone understands the definition of an Urban Forest. –An Urban Forest simply is all publicly and privately owned trees within an urban area. In other words - It's all the trees in our city.



## Tree City USA – 29 Years



- Fredericksburg has been a tree city for 29 years. Every spring the City and the Fredericksburg Council of Garden Clubs celebrates Arbor Day with a ceremony honoring a resident of Fredericksburg with a tree planted in their name.

# Arbor Day Event



- Since 2005 the Fredericksburg Council of Garden Clubs and the city have been planting the Arbor Day trees in front of Kenmore on Washington Mall.

# Arbor Day Event



- This event is attended every year by members of the garden clubs, the mayor, city council, city manager, city staff and a broad cross section of the Fredericksburg community.
- As further background, you should know that in 2005 a group of citizens and staff were appointed by the city to study the issue of the loss of the trees in our city.

# Fredericksburg Tree Plan

**2005 STREET TREE PLAN**  
**CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG**  
**VIRGINIA**

**APRIL, 2005**

**Prepared by:**  
**Fredericksburg Tree Committee**

Frank Widic, Chairperson  
Jeanette Cadwallender  
Richard Blair  
David Dorsey  
Carolyn Helfrich  
Rupert Farley  
Gary Greenwald (City Arborist)  
David King (Assistant Director of Public Works)

- The result of that study was the 2005 street tree plan that was adopted by city council. The tree plan committee inventoried the city, and determined that in 2005 there was a deficit of over 5000 street trees.

# Clean & Green Commission

- **Revitalized in 2007**
  - Address 2005 Street Tree Plan issues
  - Address loss of tree canopy
  - Green Committee established



- In 2007 the Clean & Green Commission was tasked with addressing the loss of tree canopy and other issues defined in that 2005 street tree plan. A Green Committee was established to work on these issues.
- In 2007, the Green Committee began research on a landscape plan for Washington Avenue.

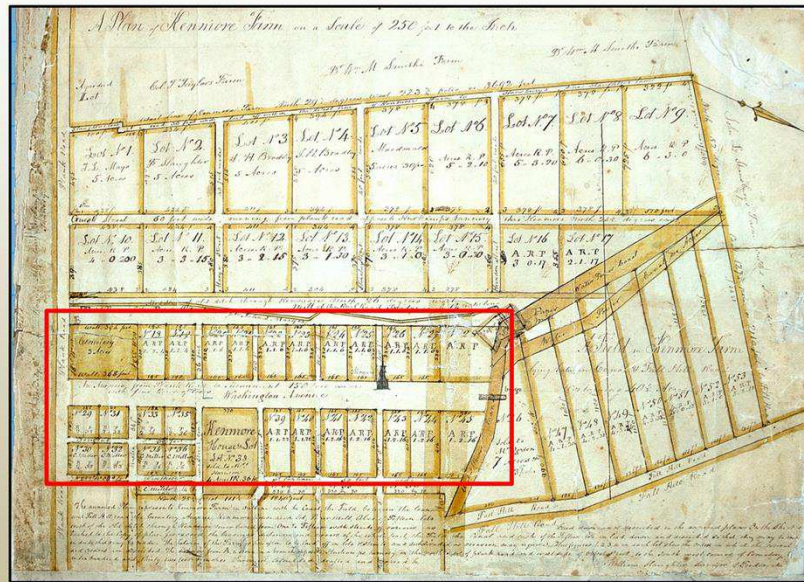


# **History**

**Erik Nelson**  
**Senior City Planner**

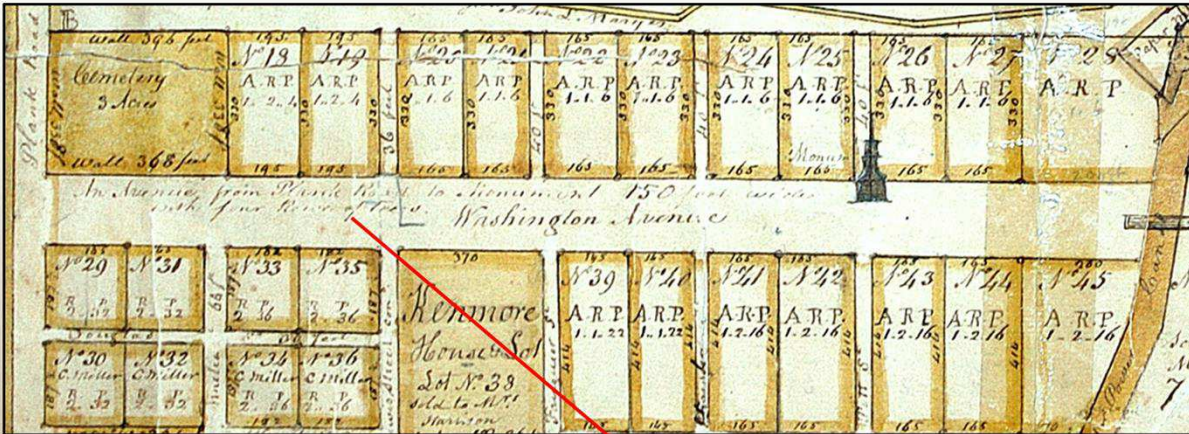
- Erik Nelson will now give you some brief details of the history of Washington Mall.

# William Slaughter Plat of Kenmore Farm 1862



- The Green committee researched the history of the mall back to 1862, the earliest history that we could find on the mall.
- In 1862, the area which is now Washington Avenue was designed by William Slaughter as part of the Kenmore Farm subdivision. This plan included the words

# William Slaughter Plat – Washington Avenue Detail



**An Avenue from Plank Road (now William St) to (Mary Washington) Monument 150 feet wide with four rows of trees**

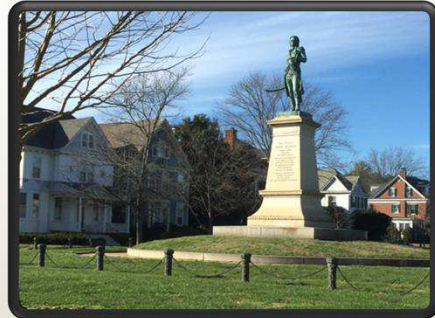
- "An Avenue from Plank Rd (which is now William Street) to the Monument - 150 feet wide with 4 rows of trees"
- Even as far back as 1862, the plan was to plant trees along the mall on each side and also in front of the houses so trees flanked the avenue on both sides.
- Washington Avenue mall is not only residential in nature. It also became a prominent civic space.



# Monuments



***Mary Washington***  
**1894**



***Hugh Mercer***  
**1906**



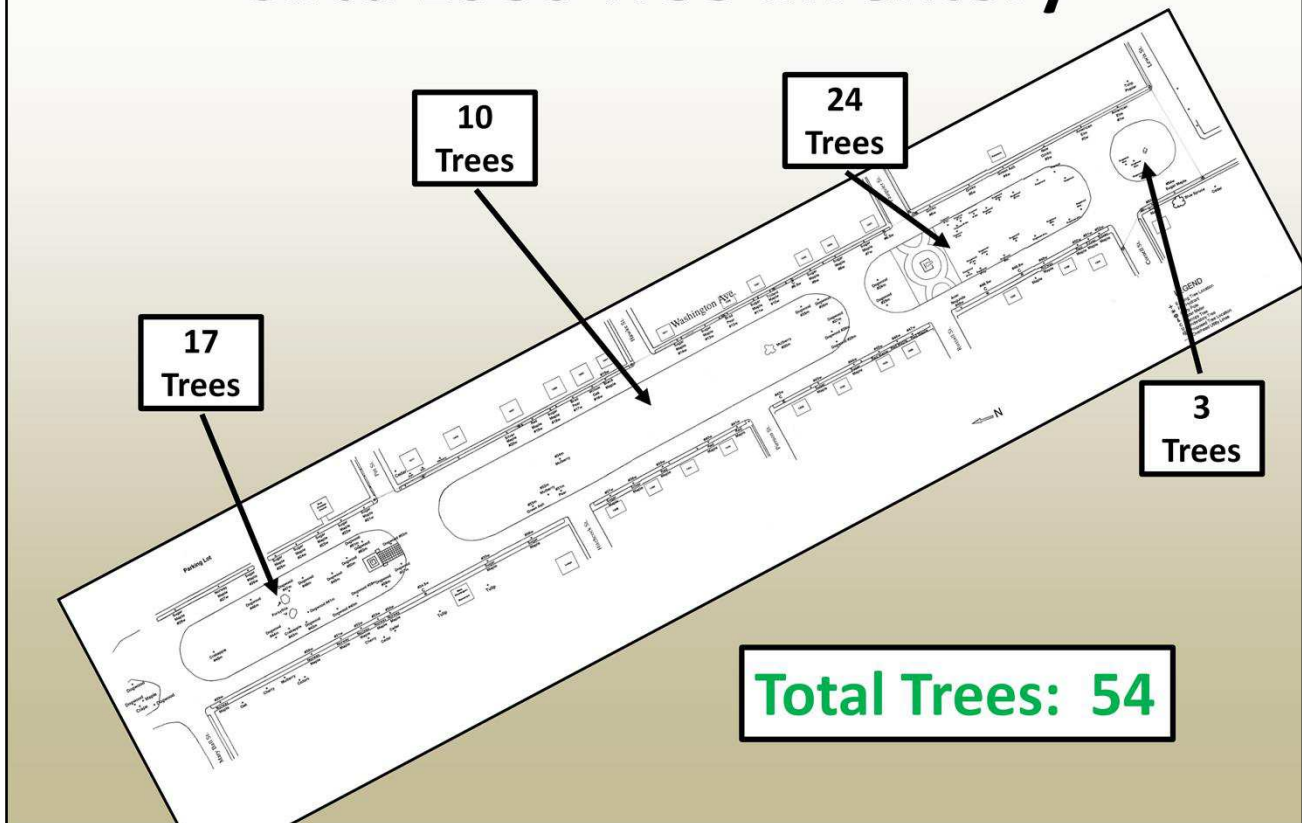
***George Rogers Clark***  
**1929**



***Religious Freedom***  
**1977**

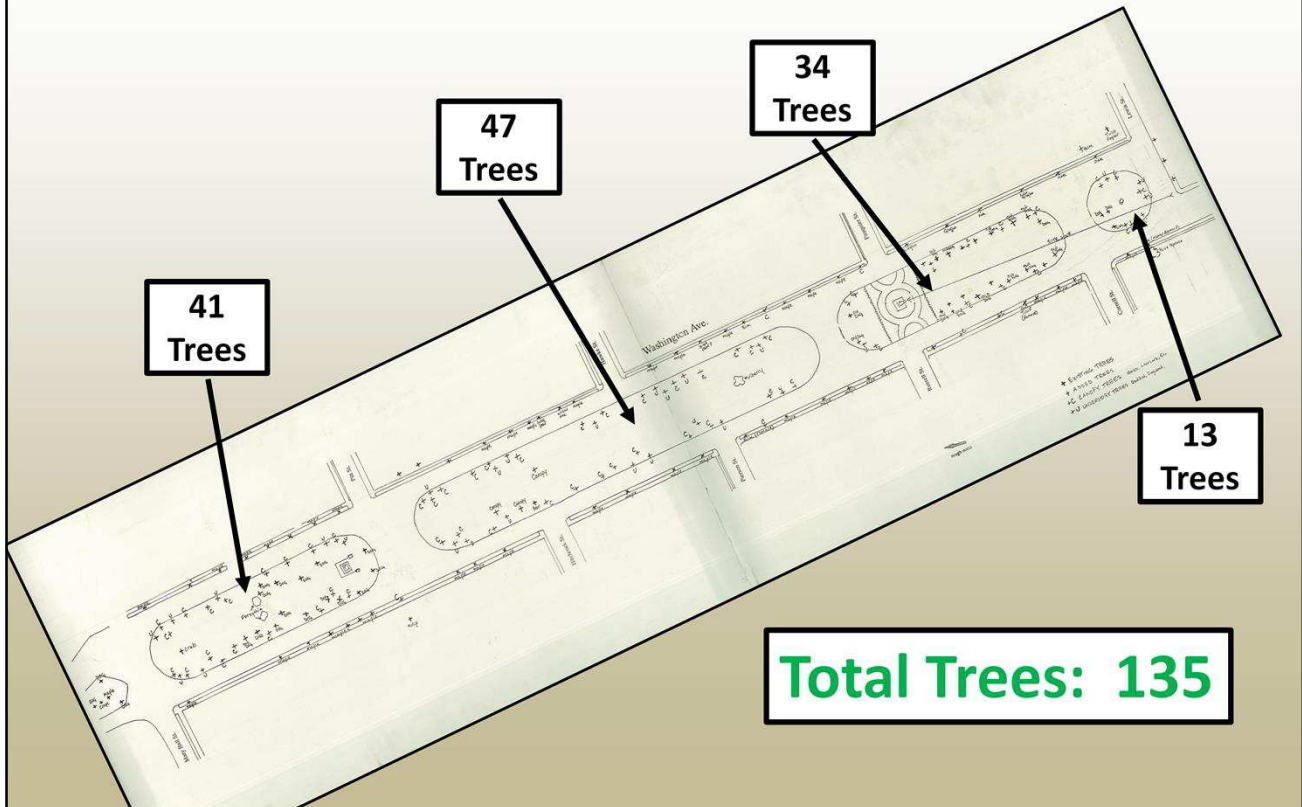
- The Mary Washington monument was completed in 1894 and anchors one end of the mall.
- Fredericksburg continued to embrace its Colonial past with a statue of Hugh Mercer erected in 1906.
- A memorial plaque celebrating George Rogers Clark was dedicated in 1929.
- A stone edifice memorializing Religious Freedom was erected on George Street in 1932, and moved to Washington Avenue in 1977.

## Circa 1980 Tree Inventory



- In the 1980's there were 54 trees on the mall shown by this inventory which was found in the Park's Department archives. .

# Circa 1980 Tree Restoration Plan



- Along with this tree inventory document we also found a restoration plan from the same period that called for the planting of 82 additional canopy trees on the Mall for a total of 135 trees. Unfortunately, these trees were never planted.

# 1995 Tree Restoration Initiative

*The Free Lance-Star*  
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1995  
SECTION B

## AREA/STATE

CLASSIFIED B4

### City turns to the past on Washington Avenue

*Landscaping will recreate turn-of-the-century look* Washington Avenue Mall

### *Landscaping will recreate turn-of-the-century look*

**By EILEEN MEAD**  
Staff Reporter

The historic Washington Avenue mall in Fredericksburg is one of the oldest landscaped urban streets in the country, and plans are under way to restore it to its former elegant simplicity.

W. Vernon Edenfield, executive director of the Kenmore Association, said that the mall predates Monument Avenue in Richmond.

He and a number of homeowners on Washington Avenue have been concerned about the poor condition

of the city-maintained mall for several years.

Thousands of tourists visit the neighborhood yearly to tour Kenmore, the 1775 Fielding Lewis mansion; and the Mary Washington Monument. Others drive by or take a walking tour to see the exteriors of the fine Victorian homes.

"It is not unreasonable to think that the city, which depends heavily on the tourist trade for business, would want to maintain this area in prime condition," Edenfield said.

Edenfield has an 1842 sketch of the

earliest design for the mall.

It was to be a grand avenue leading from Plank Road (now William Street) to the Mary Washington gravesite. Two 150-foot-wide parallel roadways with a mall between them were to be landscaped with trees and grass.

The present design is similar, but the avenue is shorter because John G. Hurkamp, owner of the property between Lewis Street and Plank Road, refused to sell the required

*Please see City, page B2*

- In 1993 neighborhood concerns spurred the city arborist to survey the 104 existing trees planted along and on Washington Mall. The conclusion of that survey was more trees were needed to carry out the original theme of the mall.
- In December of 1995 the Free Lance Star reported that Vernon Edenfield, executive director of the Kenmore Association, was leading an initiative to restore the mall "to its former elegant simplicity". In this article, Edenfield referenced the Slaughter Plat which described a grand avenue with four rows of trees along it. Edenfield further stated that the historic avenue should be refurbished as a composition rather than in a piecemeal manner.



# 1995 Tree Restoration Initiative

Tall elm trees were growing on the mall by the 1940s, but many were wiped out by blight. Many Norway maples also died and have not been replaced.

It cannot be landscaped in a piecemeal manner. It should be an outdoor piece of architecture with flat plains of grass, tall trees along the edges and the perpendicular Gen. Hugh Mercer statue – no bushes or flowers.

**City** from page B1

land, Edenfield said.

In 1891 The National Mary Washington Monument Association got the Fredericksburg Town Council to approve the plans for Mary Washington Avenue. The name was later shortened to Washington Avenue. A monument to Mary Washington was dedicated in 1894.

By the turn of the century, 10 new houses had been built along the new avenue.

Tall elm trees were growing on the mall by the 1940s, but many were wiped out by blight. Many Norway maples also died and have not been replaced.

Edenfield said that plans call for refurbishing the historic avenue as a "composition."

"It cannot be landscaped in a piecemeal manner. It should be an outdoor piece of architecture with flat plains of grass, tall trees along the edges and the perpendicular Gen. Hugh Mercer statue—no bushes or flowers," he said.

The largest section of the mall, between Pitt and Fauquier Streets, would be left open for community and public gatherings, as it has been since the early 1900s, he said.

A thicket of weeping beech trees would be planted north of that grassy plain to close the view, he said.

Tall, disease-resistant elm trees and black gum trees would be planted next to the sidewalks, shading dogwood and redbud trees in the mall itself.

A neighborhood meeting was held this month to review the plans and discuss funding for the project.

Neighbors' concerns spurred a 1993 survey of the condition of trees along the avenue.

City arborist Gary Greenwald and a team of local volunteer master gardeners examined the 104 trees along the avenue and made recommendations for treatment, pruning or replacement.

City maintenance crews have started to care for the trees, Edenfield said, but a grant will be necessary to purchase more trees to carry out the original theme of the mall.

The master gardeners have volunteered to do similar audits of city trees in other neighborhoods.

They would also like to work with residents on their ideas for tree plantings.

To learn more about the city tree program, call 372-1023.

ers?nid=9FRKRCIz75UC&dat=19951218&...

- The Free Lance Star article described the Washington Mall of the 1940s as having tall elm trees and many maples growing on it. The Elms were lost to blight and the Norway Maples died and were never replaced.
- This 1995 initiative evidently lost momentum due to a lack of funding to implement it.

# Loss of Trees 1980 to 2007



**Total Trees Lost by 2007: -25**  
**Total Trees Remaining: 29**

- By 2007, 25 of the 54 trees shown in the 1980 Inventory, had died leaving only 29 trees remaining. In fact, today there are only 12 trees left from that original 54. It was at this point that the Green Committee began the design process to restore the tree canopy on Washington Avenue.

# **Principles of Design**

**Anne Gearon  
Green Committee  
Landscape Architect**

- **Anne Gearon from the Green Committee will now talk about the principles of design**
- Washington Avenue is a great example of the City Beautiful Movement of urban planning, developed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



# Grand Avenues

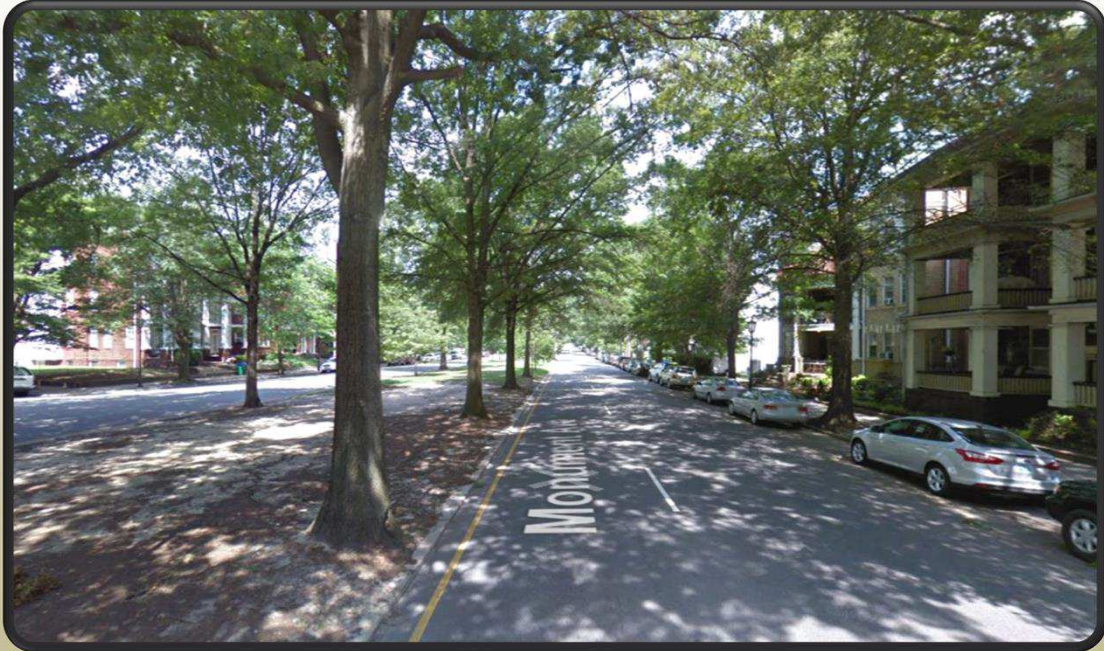


- Landscape architects and urban planners, envisioned grand avenues and malls as the settings for grand housing, incorporating monuments and large trees. Grand canopy trees are an integral part of this concept. Examples of tree lined avenues include:



# **Grand Avenues**

## **Monument Ave – Richmond**



- Monument Avenue in Richmond

# **Grand Avenues**

## **Oglethorpe Avenue – Savannah**



- Oglethorpe Ave in Savannah, and



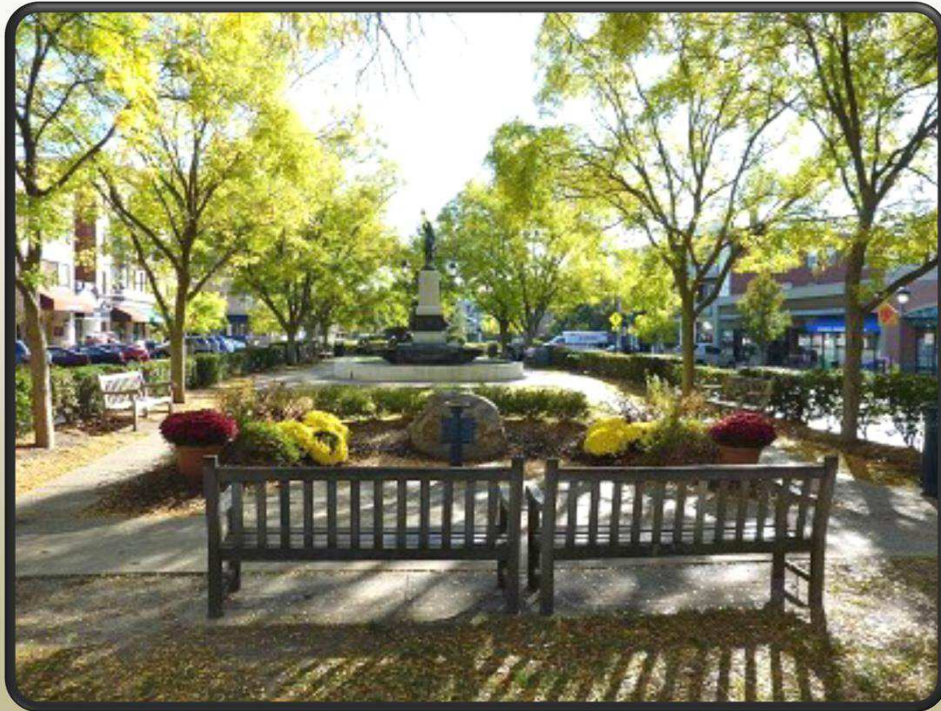
# Grand Avenues

## Saint Charles Avenue– New Orleans



- St Charles Avenue in New Orleans. All of these prominently feature mature canopy trees to enhance the avenues.
- The Green committee began the design of Washington Avenue using the following design principles:

## Create a Sense of Place



- We plant trees to create a sense of place



# Shade is Essential



- People want to gather where there is shade.

# Depth and Perspective



- Trees give a sense of depth and perspective.



## Trees Frame Elements



- Trees help to frame an imposing residence, or a man made accent like a statue or fountain.

# Arching Branches of Trees



- Trees can be encouraged to grow tall by pruning away lower limbs. The trunks and arching branches resembling vaulted columns, that create a cathedral effect.



## Four Season Beauty



- Trees should provide visual interest throughout the year using color and texture.

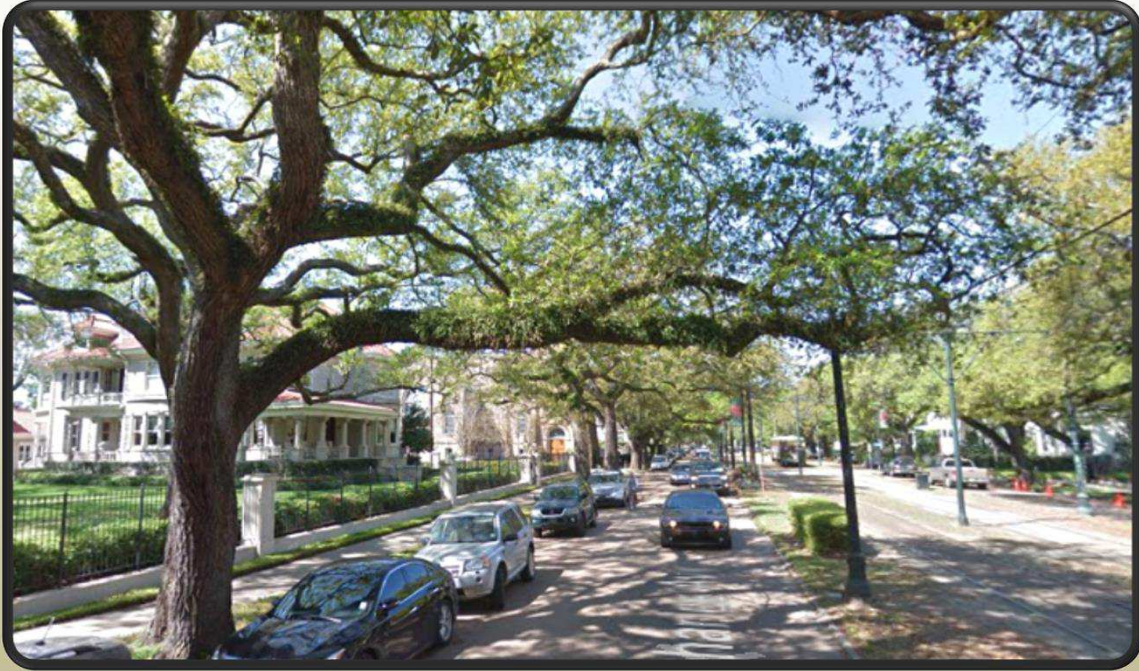
# Trees Enhance Hardscapes



- Trees provide a green environment to contrast with hardscape and buildings. Here is a photo of a street in Michigan where the trees all died from the emerald ash borer insect – just look at the difference the loss of trees make.



## Create a Grand Avenue



- The ultimate vision for Washington Avenue was a grand avenue with grand houses and grand trees to match.

## **Green Committee Members**

**Dave King**

**Assistant Director Public Works**

**City Arborist**

## Green Committee

- **City Arborist; Assistant Director, Public Works Dept** – Dave King
- **Certified Landscape Designer; B.S. Horticulture, Virginia Tech**– Carolyn Helfrich
- **Director of Landscape & Grounds, UMW** – Joni Wilson
- **Director of Gardens & Landscapes, George Washington Foundation** – Phoebe Wessinger
- **Landscape Architect** – Anne Gearon
- **Senior City Planner, Planning Dept** – Erik Nelson
- **Head Gardener, Parks & Recreation Dept** – Robin Saunders & James Bell (Retired)
- **Park Maintenance Supervisor, Parks & Recreation Dept** – Aaron Simmons
- **City Tree Crew Supervisor** – Gary Johnson
- **Bartlett Tree Experts** – Jason Coiner, Rob Allen (Former Member)
- **Arborist, Dominion VA Power** – Hunter Woods, Matt Boltz (Former Member)
- **Design Consultant, Green Springs Farm** – David Dorsey
- **Forester, Virginia Department of Forestry** – Thomas Snoddy
- **Tree Fredericksburg** – Anne Little & Carl Little
- **Friends of the Rappahannock** – Bryan Hofmann
- **2005 Tree Committee, Chair** – Frank Widic
- **Soil Specialist** – Morgan Kash
- **Stormwater Administrator, Planning Dept** – Kevin Utt

- There have been over 20 people who have served or are serving on the Green Committee.
- Aside from City staff, the members of the committee are all volunteers. Many are professionals in the Arboriculture Industry, donating their time and expertise to the city. Some of the members of the Green Committee are:
- Myself, the City Arborist
- Carolyn Helfrich - a Certified Landscape Designer
- The Director of Landscape & Grounds at UMW – Joni Wilson
- The Director of Gardens & Landscapes at Kenmore – Phoebe Wessinger
- Anne Gearon -a Landscape Architect
- Senior City Planner- Erik Nelson
- The Parks & Rec Head Gardener and the maintenance supervisor –Robin Saunders and Aaron Simmons
- And many others
- Will the members of the Green Committee who are here tonight please stand up.

# **Design Process**

**Carolyn Helfrich**

**B.S. Horticulture, Virginia Tech  
Certified Landscape Designer**

**Joni Wilson**

**Director Landscape & Grounds, UMW**

- Joni Wilson and Carolyn Helfrich will now take you through the design process.



# Mall Layout



- Trees selected for Washington Avenue were designed to give a grand presence to the mall and add shade to encourage visitors to linger and enjoy the monuments and beautiful homes.
- A formal, symmetrical design was preferred for the more formal atmosphere of this area. Large trees planted in an allee'or tree avenue, leads to a view that enhances and frames the statues versus a random planting design that takes your eye away from the beauty of the mall.
- Let us walk through each island for clarification.

# Lewis Circle



- On Lewis Circle -The monument to George Rogers Clark is a large boulder with a plaque on it.
- Redbud and crabapple trees were planted around the monument to create an intimate space and layers of color in early spring and summer.
- A Black gum tree, was deliberately planted behind the monument to stop your eye and bring focus back to the Clark monument.

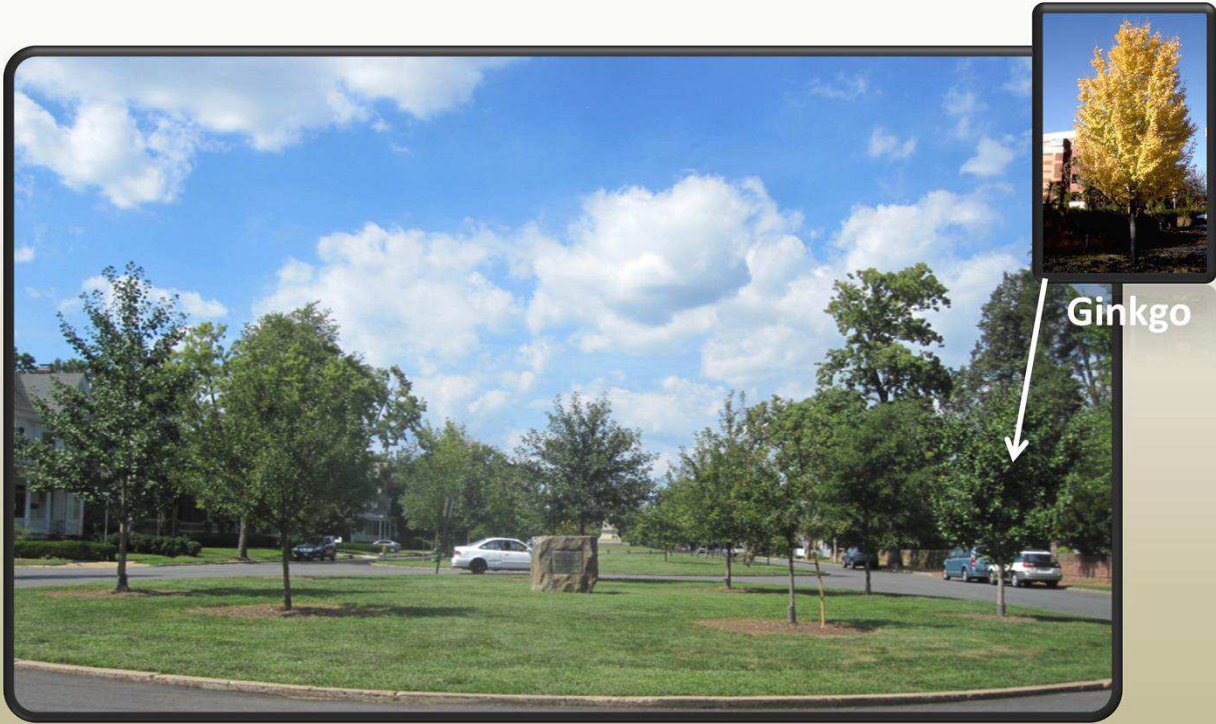


## View of Mercer Statue from Lewis Circle



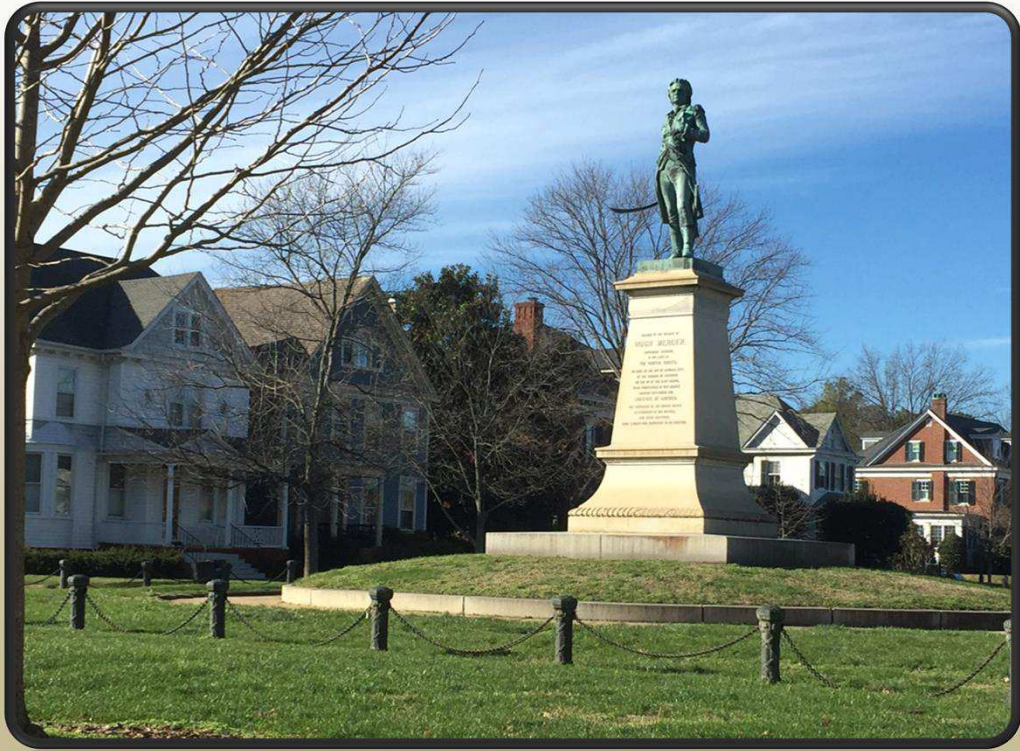
- As you can see, the view to the Mercer monument is preserved on each corner of this circle.

# Lewis Circle



- Ginkgo trees were placed on each corners of Lewis Circle to create walls, and a sense of place. In the fall the Ginkgo tree turn a spectacular shade of gold – creating four golden pillars surrounding this monument. Clear open space in front of the monument invites the visitor to come closer.

# Mercer Island



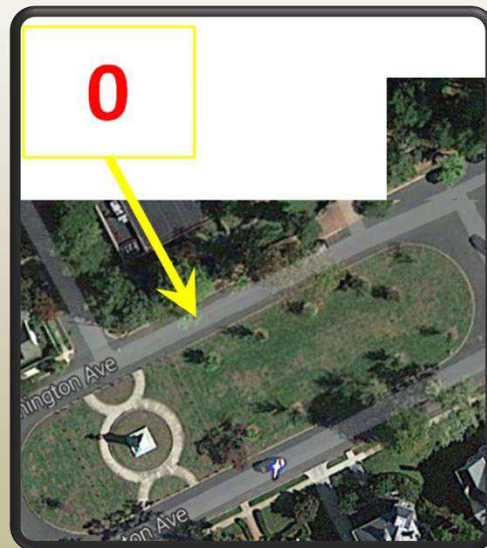
- Mercer Island has a larger presence because of the Mercer statue which is 30 ft tall.



## Mercer Island Tree Loss



**Circa 1980 Inventory**



**Today**

- Since 1980 all of the 24 trees that were on Mercer Island have died – almost all of them dogwoods. Dogwoods, the state tree of Virginia, are understory trees, and do not thrive without canopy trees. The Green Committee decided that replanting dogwoods without canopy trees would be a mistake. The consensus was that the Washington Avenue mall called for large canopy trees to create a grand allee or tree avenue.



# Mercer Island



- To that end, five canopy trees are planted along each side of this island. Right now these canopy trees are still small, but as they grow –

# Mercer Island



- - the lower limbs will be pruned away, allowing the topmost branches to arch up and out and create a 'cathedral' effect.

# Monument Avenue Richmond



- As the trees grow and are pruned up, the site lines to the other side of the avenue will be realized and the houses will be visible. On monument avenue in Richmond, towering oaks are pruned up 15-18 feet and afford a spectacular view of the avenue and the adjacent houses.



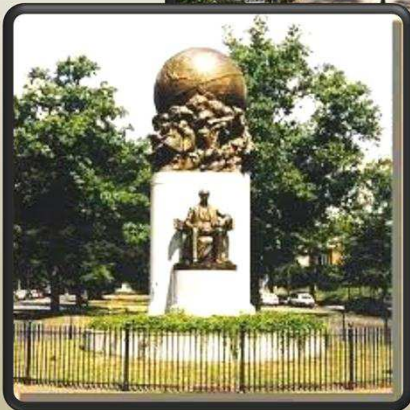
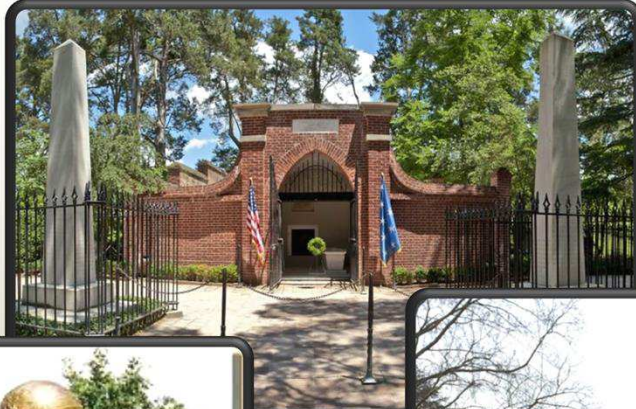
# Hugh Mercer



Elm

- Two elm trees were planted behind the Mercer statue to honor John Tippet for his work with Friends of the Rappahannock. As these two elm trees grow they will arch above and behind the monument, framing the statue in a green bower.

**George Washington Grave**



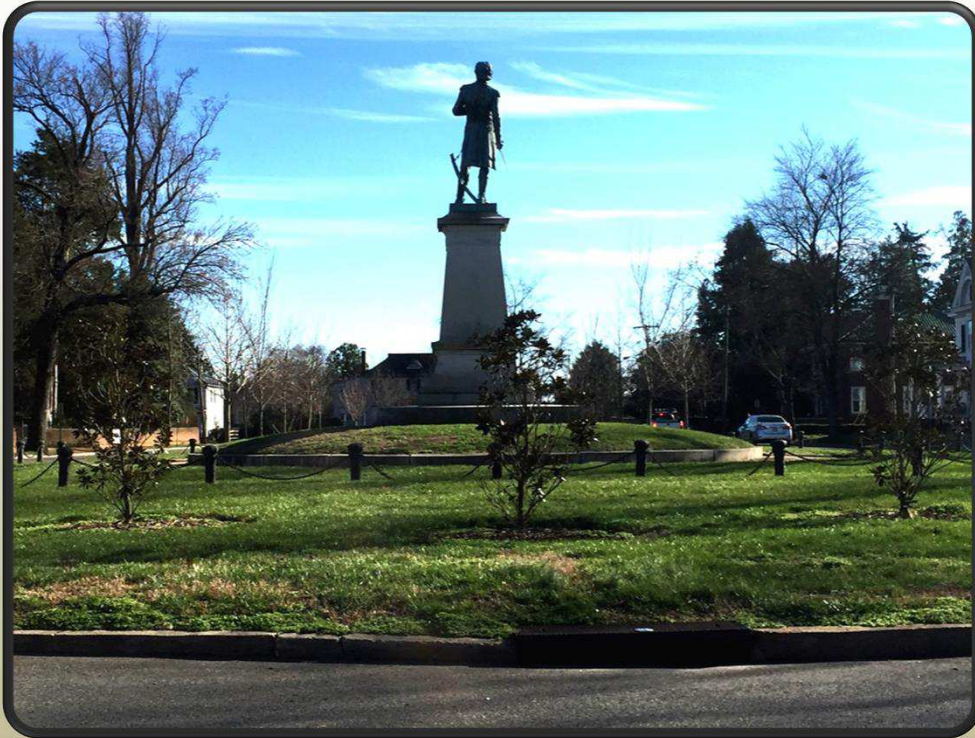
**Mathew Maury Monument**



**Mary Washington Monument**

- As you can see, many other monuments are flanked by trees to give them a sense of place.

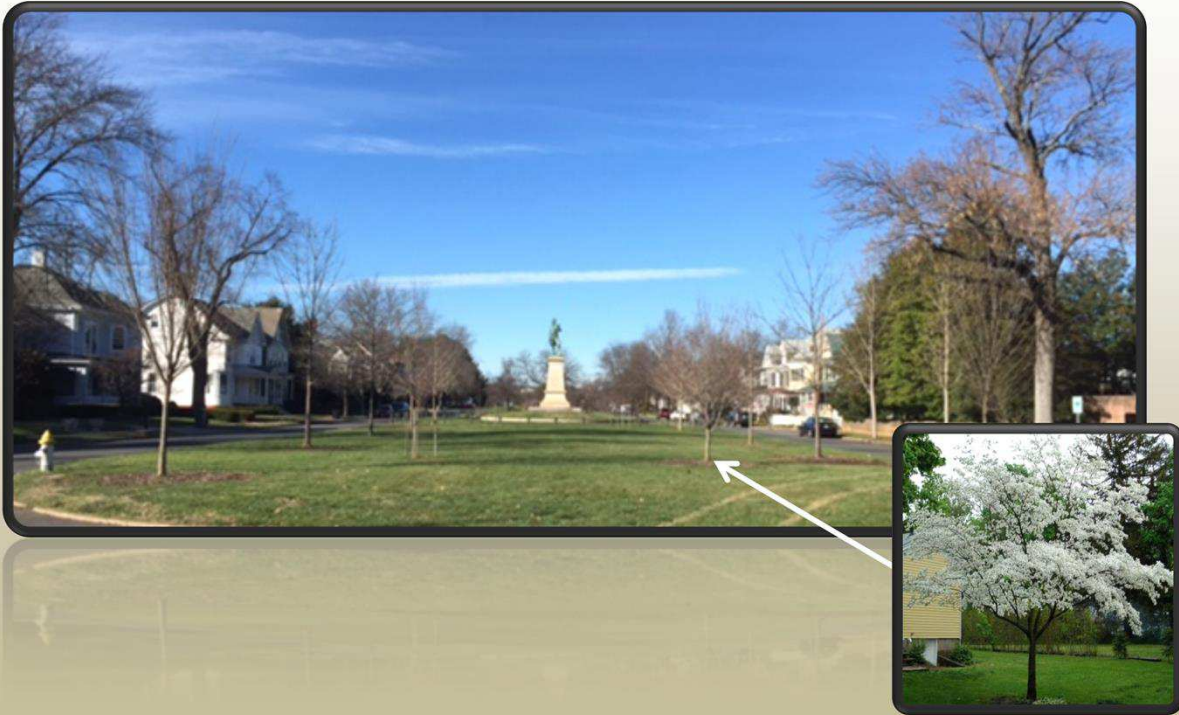
# Little Gem Magnolia



- Three little gem magnolias are planted behind the statue to give an evergreen backdrop to the monument. These magnolias will grow to a maximum height of 15 -20 feet behind the 30 ft statue.

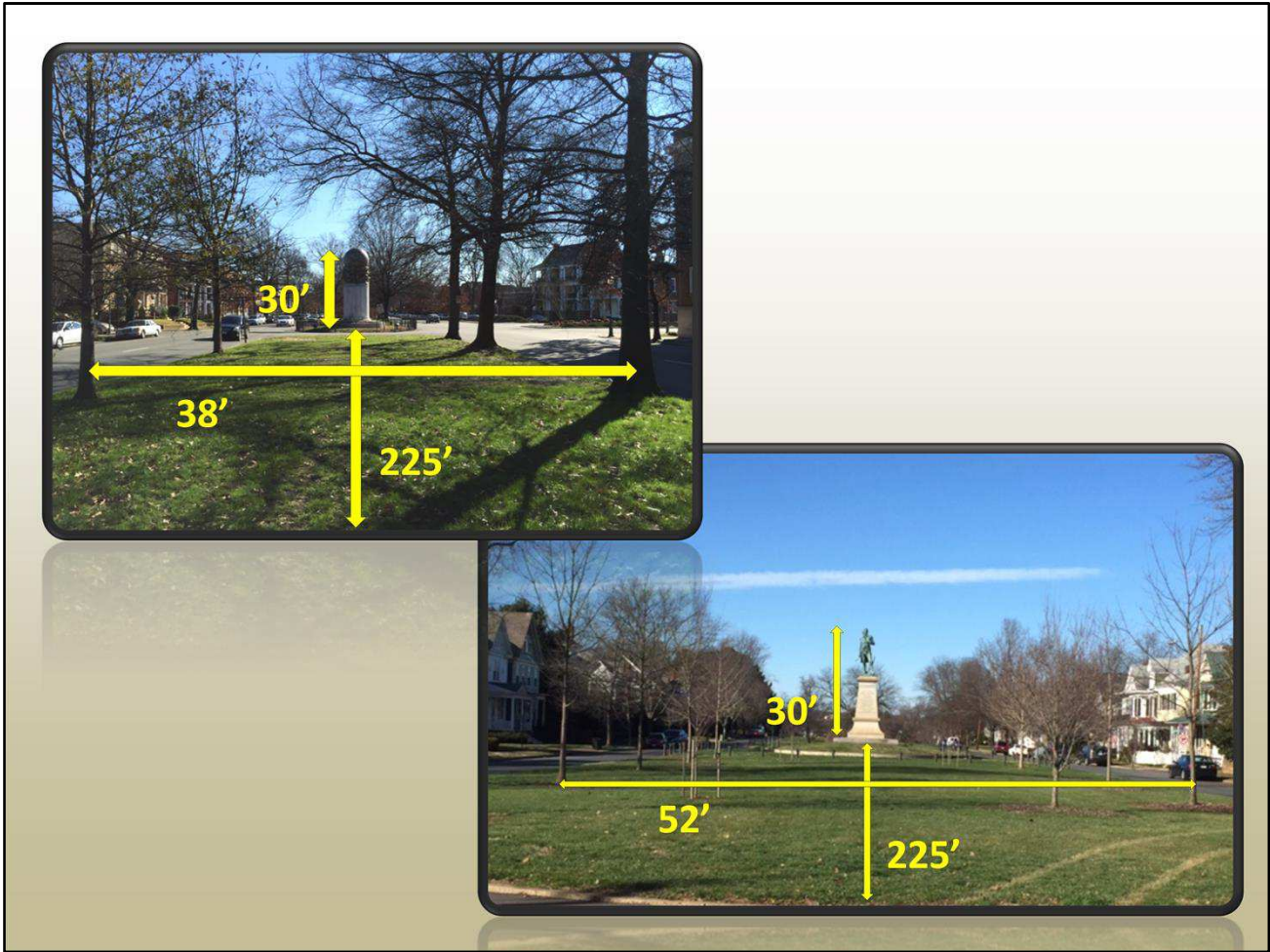


# Mercer Island



Dogwood

- Four dogwood trees were planted from 2005 to 2008 by the Fredericksburg Council of Garden Clubs as memorial trees for Arbor Day. Unfortunately three of these had died over the last few years but were recently replaced.



- These two slides show the comparison between Mercer Monument and the Matthew Maury Monument in Richmond. Both monuments are 30 ft high. The width of Monument Avenue is narrower than Washington Avenue. The trees on Monument Avenue are 38 ft apart, the trees on Washington Avenue are wider - 52 ft apart. Both views to the Maury Monument and the Mercer Monument as shown are 225 ft.



- All tree planting on Mercer Island is complete. It will take a few years for the trees to mature but the canopy effect will be like that found on Monument Avenue in Richmond only more open.

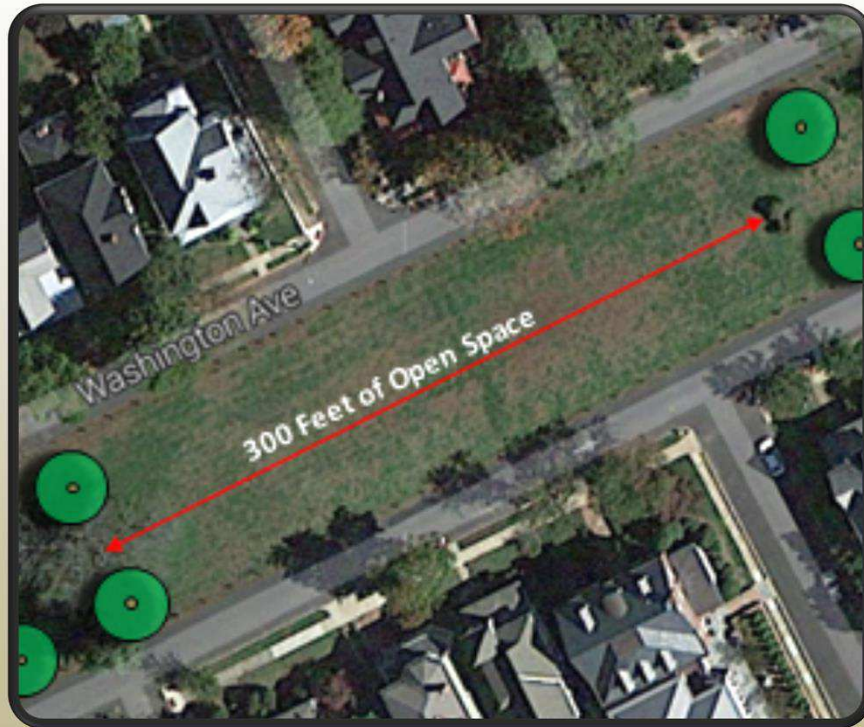


# Large Island



- Since there are no monuments on the large island the most important design component was to preserve the 300 ft open football field size area in the center -

# Play Field



- - to accommodate the desires of the community for Mall Ball, soccer, football, lacrosse, and other play.

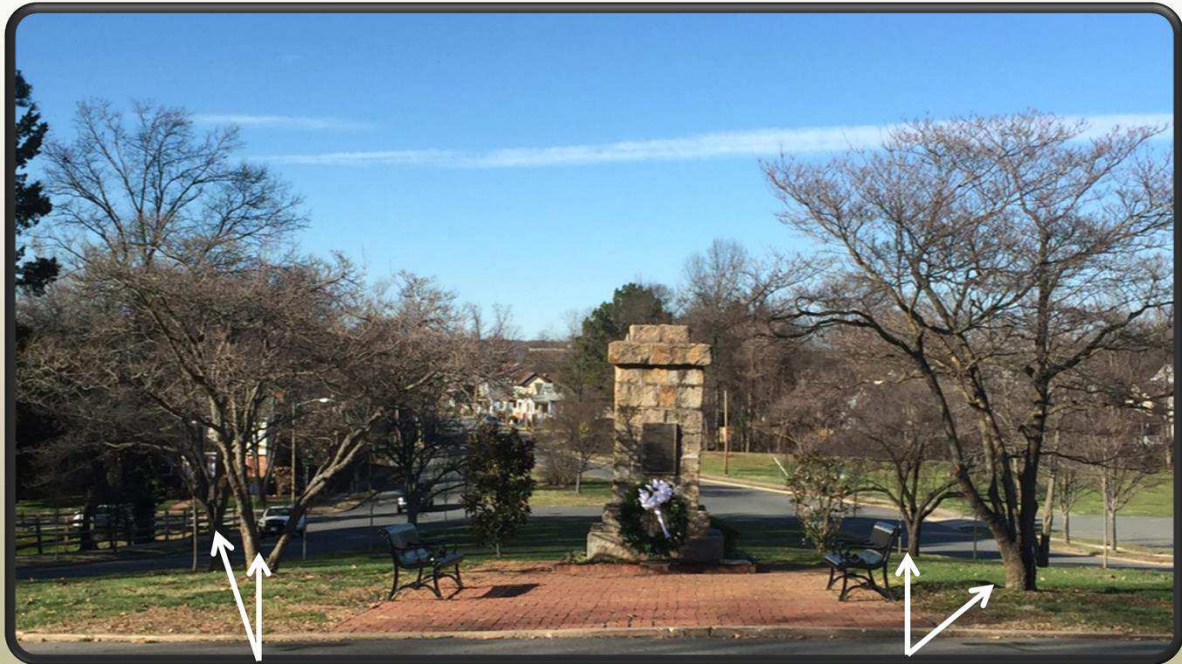
# Large Island



- Large canopy trees are slated to be planted on each end of this island to anchor the space and create an inviting canopy.



# Religious Freedom Monument

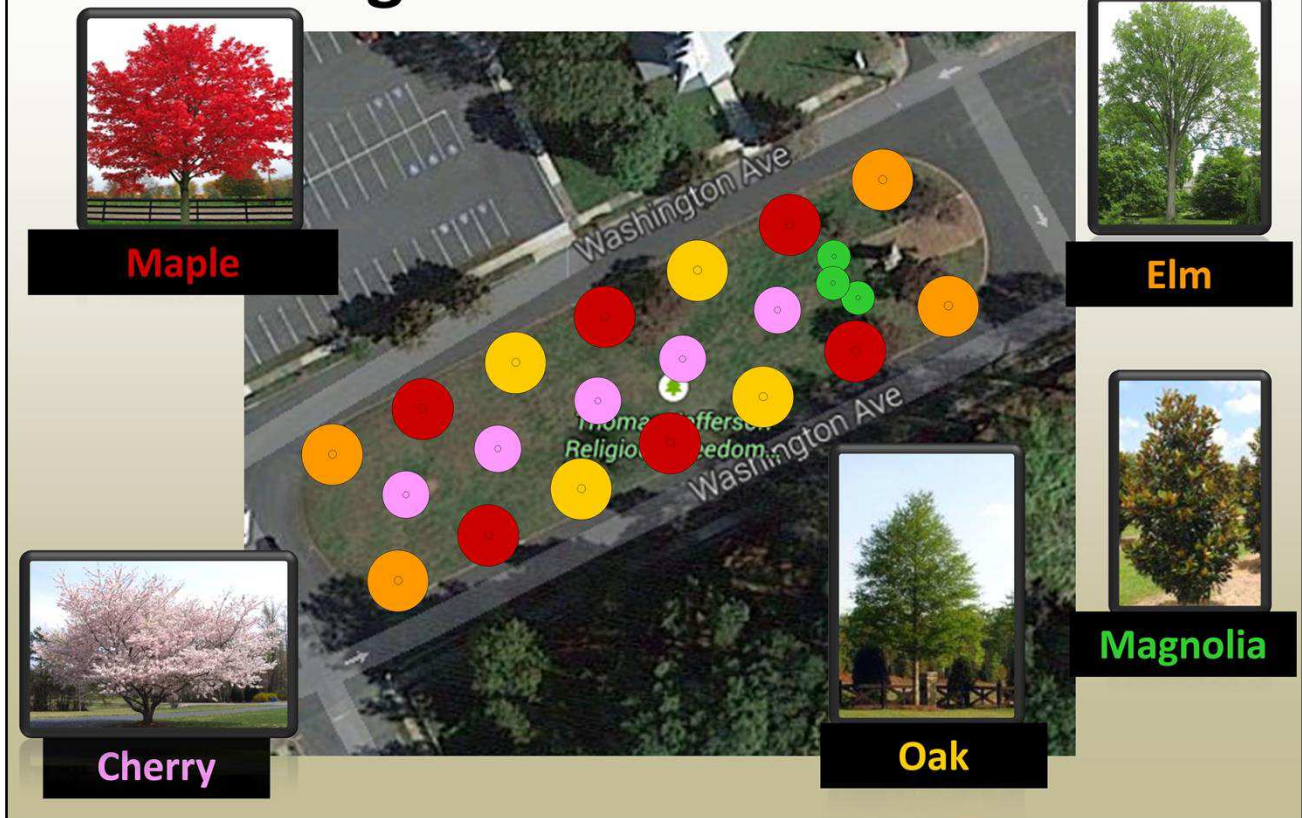


Old Dogwoods

Old Dogwoods

- The Religious Freedom Monument Island originally had 17 trees in the 1980's.
- There are still four old dogwoods grouped around the monument but they are dying and will soon be gone. These dogwoods have been left in place in order to give texture to the area around the monument until the newly planted trees grow larger. Right now the monument looks a bit crowded, but the vista will open up once the dogwoods are gone.

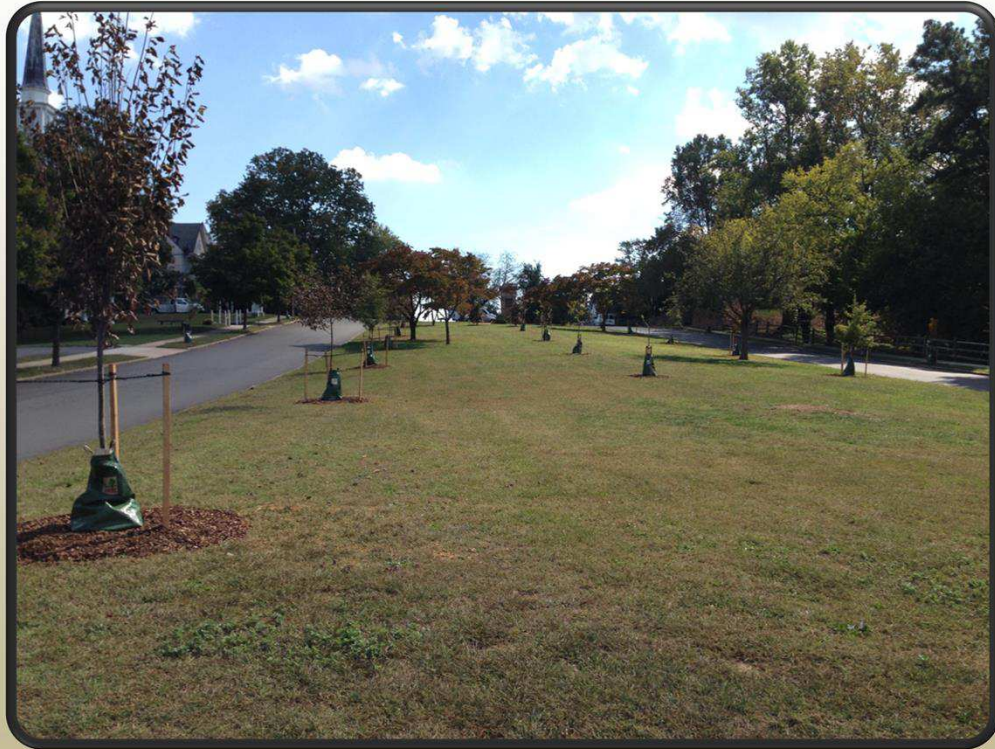
# Religious Freedom Island



- Seven large canopy trees have been planted on each side on the slope behind the monument. These are a mixture of oaks, elms, and maples. Five cherry trees are planted down the center of the island. These cherry trees will give a welcome burst of spring color in early April. Three little gem magnolias offer an evergreen backdrop to the monument.



# Religious Freedom Island



- All tree planting on this island was completed in fall 2012.



## **Recap**

**Dave King**  
**Assistant Director Public Works**  
**City Arborist**

- The plan for Washington Mall was completed in 2008 and approved, both by Parks and Recreation and Public Works.

## City Crew Planting Lewis Circle – 2008



- The city tree crew began the restoration of Washington Mall with the planting of six trees on Lewis Circle in the fall of 2008. At that time, the adjacent residents were notified and informed of the plan and the planting.



Artistic Representation

- In the end, Washington Mall is a public space that belongs to all the residents of the City. The Green Committee and city staff worked to ensure that the best interest of the entire community was served by creating a welcoming space for residents and visitors alike - A grand avenue with grand trees.