

CARTER HILL BATTLEFIELD PARK

WHAT WOULD IT BE?

A City of Franklin Civil War battlefield park located adjacent to the Carter House property (state site) along Columbia Avenue (U.S. Highway 31) and also located across the street from the Carter House.

The City park site would include the following:

- (a) Pizza Hut site previously acquired by the City
- (b) the Carter Gardens I site
- (c) the two Lovell tracts (Franklin Flower Shop and CASA office building)
- (d) the Holt property
- (e) the Cameron property (consisting of the retail strip center and the Domino's site)
- (f) the Cotton Gin site
- (g) the Fudge property
- (h) the Eley property
- (i) the Neel property

The properties described in subparts (a) – (i) above are contiguous except as divided by Columbia Avenue and Cleburne Street. It is anticipated that the City park properties would be interpreted in conjunction with the State owned Carter House site (including the old gym site), the Miller House site (owned by Carter House Association, Inc.), and the Lotz House (a private site).

At the City's election, the park property also could include non-contiguous and to-be-developed sites known as Lorings Advance (5 Acres) and the Dooley property (an existing house site).

WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICANCE?

(a) Historical. It is the high-water mark of the Confederate charge against entrenched Union troops during the November 30, 1864 Battle of Franklin. On this site, a large percentage of the 9,000-10,000 casualties of the Battle occurred. There are numerous stories to interpret at this site: (i) the individual bravery of troops fighting on the both sides during the Battle; (ii) the death or mortal wounding of five generals for the southern troops; (iii) the heroic acts of Union troops who earned Congressional Medals of Honor for their valor on the battlefield; (iv) the Todd Carter story; (v) the military strategy of General Hood and General Schofield; (vi) the rare occurrence of fighting a battle largely at twilight and during the night; (vii) the gruesome effect of hand-to-hand combat by thousands of troops; (viii) the stories surrounding nationally known soldiers like John Bell Hood, John Schofield, Patrick Cleburne, and Arthur McArthur; (ix) the direct impact of a battle this large on both the free and enslaved citizens of Franklin, and (x) life in Franklin both before and after the battle.

Militarily some historians say that the Battle of Franklin is where the South's hopes to continue the War collapsed, and where the Army of Tennessee suffered a fatal blow.

What we have seen nationally is that the significance of the 1864 Battle of Franklin in the overall context of the American Civil War has been growing. Beginning with the April, 2004 edition of The National Geographic, the importance of the Battle of Franklin has been highlighted in the volume of books that have been published about the American Civil War as a prelude to the Sesquicentennial, in videos and documentaries, and most recently in the PBS series on Civil War battles.

(b) Battlefield Preservation. The Carter Hill Battlefield Park would represent a crowning achievement nationally in preservation of American Civil War battlefields. The idea of converting an office building, a Pizza Hut, a flower shop, an office rental building, a retail strip center anchored by a Dominos and local market, and a portion of a residential neighborhood—all of which are located in part of the downtown area of America's 14th fastest growing city—into a passive historic 18 acre park featuring historic buildings that existed during the battle, together with the same green space that would have been present in 1864 along with interpretive signage and related amenities is one that years ago would have been highly improbable. Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Trust and nationally recognized for his efforts in preserving America's Civil War battlefields, has proclaimed that there is no other place in America that can compare to the public-private initiative in Franklin. In 2003, Franklin was removed from the list of America's "ten most endangered battlefields." It was removed because it had become a lost opportunity. But that changed dramatically in 2004 when local preservationists and the City of Franklin created one of America's most unique public-private partnerships and literally began reclaiming sections of Franklin's Civil War battlefields. The Carter Hill Battlefield Park is the next stage of that effort.

(c) Comports with Planning Concepts. The concept of the Carter Hill Battlefield Park comports with national, regional, and local planning precepts. The development of the Carter Hill Battlefield Park accomplishes the general objectives spelled out in each of the following public planning guidelines: (a) the City of Franklin's Master Plan, (b) the City of Franklin's Battlefield Plan, (c) the American Battlefield Protection Program, (d) the published goals of the Tennessee Historic Commission, and (e) Civil Wars Trail Program.

(d) Tourism, Etc. There are other material benefits to creating the Carter Hill Battlefield Park: (i) increased tourism which means increased sales tax revenues, (ii) regardless of the historical aspect, it results in increased park space for walking and passive enjoyment, and (iii) a positive redevelopment of a portion of the downtown core.

WHAT ARE THE PROPERTIES THAT WOULD MAKE UP THE CARTER HILL BATTLEFIELD PARK?

A. East Side of Columbia:

1. Pizza Hut Site. Existing park space at the intersection of Columbia Avenue and Cleburne Street: the former Pizza hut site was acquired by the City of Franklin in November, 2005 at a cost of \$300,000.00. **[CURRENTLY CITY OWNED]**

2. Neel Tract. Site on which a residence was located, which site is behind the former Pizza Hut site. Acquired on December 5, 2012 by the Civil War Trust and

Franklin's Charge. Now owned by Franklin's Charge. Acquired for \$230,000.00. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

3. Eley House. Located behind the Neel Tract and 2 properties behind the former Pizza Hut. Purchased for \$235,000 with monies from American Battlefield Protection Program, Civil War Trust, and City of Franklin. Title is vested in the Civil War Trust. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

4. Strip Center Site. Site of the Dominos and local market located on the north side of Cleburne Street and Columbia Avenue. Acquired by Franklin's Charge and the Civil War Trust in December, 2012 for \$1,850,000.00. Title is currently vested in the Civil War Trust. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

5. Holt Tract. Site on which Holt Construction maintained an office. Located at 1219 Columbia Avenue. Acquired by Franklin's Charge in September, 2008 for \$950,000.00. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

6. Cotton Gin Site. Site of the Carter Cotton Gin. Purchased by The Heritage Foundation for Franklin and Williamson County in 1996 for \$160,000.00. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

7. Fudge House. Property located immediately east of Cotton Gin site. Purchased by Civil War Trust and Franklin's Charge for \$199,000.00 in June, 2010. Currently owned by Franklin's Charge. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

8. Lorings Advance: Unattached property located nearby in the Adams Street area. In a transaction arranged by Save the Franklin Battlefield, the property was purchased by the Civil War Trust. Acquired for \$200,000.00. **[COULD BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

B. West Side of Columbia:

1. Lovell Tracts: Property under contract with Franklin's Charge and Battle of Franklin Trust as purchasers for \$2,800,000.00. Closing scheduled for May, 2015. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

2. Initial Carter Garden Site: Located in the Strahl Street area. Purchased in 2006 for \$210,000.00. Currently owned by Carter House Association, Inc. **[PROPOSED TO BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

3. Dooley Site: Site on which a residence stood in the Battle Avenue area, located at 1404 Columbia Avenue. Acquired by the Civil War Trust on November 12, 2012 for \$129,900.00. **[COULD BE OWNED BY THE CITY]**

C. Contributing Properties (These properties would not be owned by the City):

East Side of Columbia

1. Miller House: Property deeded to the Carter House Association, Inc.
2. Lotz House: Private owned historical site.

West Side of Columbia

1. Carter House (owned by State of Tennessee – under management by the Battle of Franklin Trust)
2. Gym Site (owned by State of Tennessee – plans are being discussed to dismantle the gym structure and to interpret the site along with the Carter House – in this event, the property would be managed by the Battle of Franklin Trust)

PROPOSAL

Essential Elements:

- Have the preservation groups convey title to the City to the following properties in exchange for \$1,500,000.00:
 - the Carter Gardens I site
 - the two Lovell tracts (the Franklin Flower Shop and CASA Office Building)
 - the Holt property
 - the Cameron property (consisting of the retail strip center and the Domino's site)
 - the Cotton Gin site
 - the Fudge property
 - the Eley property
 - the Neel property
 - the Lorings Advance site (if the City so chose)
 - the Dooley property (if the City so chose)
- The total purchase price paid by the preservation groups for the property proposed to be conveyed to the City is \$6,968,900 (including the Lorings Advance site and the Dooley property) and \$6,639,000 (excluding the Lorings Advance site and the Dooley property)
- The amount proposed to be paid by the City is less than 25% of the aggregate purchase price paid by the preservation groups for the property. For comparison purposes, when the City paid for the Eastern Flank Battlefield, it paid 50% of the acquisition cost and the preservation groups paid 50%. When the City paid for the Collins Farm site it paid Save the Franklin Battlefield approximately 25% of the cost that Save the Franklin Battlefield originally paid for the Collins Farm site.
- Excluding the yet-to-be acquired Lovell tracts, none of the other properties to be conveyed to the City are subject to any mortgage lien – those properties are free of debt.

- The amount proposed to be paid by the City for the property would be used by the preservation groups to help pay for the acquisition of the Lovell tracts. Currently, the preservation groups are working with the following assumptions about the Lovell purchase:

➤	Total Purchase Price:	\$2,800,000.00
➤	ABPP Grant:	\$1,300,000.00
➤	Civil War Trust Commitment:*	\$ 300,000.00
	<i>Includes personal commitment of \$100,000.00 of Civil War Trust Board Chair, Mike Grainger</i>	
➤	Gifts/Pledges on Hand:	\$ 200,000.00

The preservation groups are continuing to raise funds. If the City committed to pay \$1,500,000 for the Park Properties, then the preservation groups would use that commitment to obtain a loan for the amount needed to fund the Lovell acquisition. The preservation groups have discussed this idea with several financial institutions who have indicated a willingness to make an acquisition loan to the preservation groups supported by a City commitment.

The commitment to pay the proposed purchase amount by the City could be evidenced by a purchase agreement with a five-seven year pay-out period.

The preservation groups would anticipate that the City would fund the purchase through the hotel/motel tax revenues and not from property taxes or sales taxes.

If the City's payment resulted in any excess of funds over and above the cost of acquiring the Lovell tracts, the preservation groups would commit to use such excess for additional property acquisitions to be incorporated into the City's Civil War battlefield park.

- The preservation groups would be responsible for the cost of removing structures from the property to be acquired by the City.
- The preservation groups have obtained the commitment of Calvin Lehew to rebuild the 1864 Cotton Gin on the battlefield property to serve as an interpretive element. This would be a benefit to the City, but at no cost to the City.
- The preservation groups have obtained the support of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage area to fund interpretive signage and trails in the park property in a fashion similar to that done at the Eastern Flank Battlefield Park. This would be a benefit to the City, but at no cost to the City.
- The preservation groups would work in a collaborative manner with the City of Franklin to interpret the Carter House properties, the Lotz House, and the battlefield park properties into a comprehensive tourist experience.