

Cameron Run Regional Park

For a long time, the flood plane around Cameron Run was regarded by most as just another industrial zone. Railroads and metro lines track through it. No one lived there and few things even grew along the waterway. Cameron Run is clearly visible from the Capital Beltway on your right as you drive clockwise from Route 1 in Alexandria. A different vision held by the Director of the City of Alexandria Transportation and Environmental Services Division is changing the area. Trees were planted. A small lake was created in 1985 as a place for urban trout fishing. It was eventually named Lake Cook in honor of that Director. The lake forms the backdrop of Cameron Run Regional Park, that is probably still better known for its wave pool, water slides, batting cage, and miniature golf course. Holmes Run is a tributary to Cameron Run. A paved trail follows along both watercourses from Old Town Alexandria, to near Bailey's Crossroads.

Getting There

By Automobile

Take Exit 3A off the Capital Beltway, Rte. I-95, onto Clermont Dr.; the Eisenhower Ave. Connector road. If your coming clockwise around the beltway turn right at the stop at the end of the ramp; if coming counterclockwise around the beltway, turn left at the stop at the end of the ramp. Next, turn right on Eisenhower Ave. After 0.6 miles, turn left into the Cameron Run Regional Park parking lot. Start on the trail along the road near the entrance to the park.

By Metro

The Eisenhower Ave. metro station is approximately 1.85 miles from Cameron Run Regional Park. Follow Eisenhower Ave. west from the station to get to the park, or just start the routes from the station.

Area Routes

Lower Holmes Run (3.6 or 4.1 miles, III)

The Holmes Run trail starts near Cameron Run Regional Park. After crossing over and under bridges for Holmes Run, for the metro and for some railroad lines, the flat paved trail very slowly climbs. 1.1 miles after turning to go up Holmes Run, on your right you can see the Bicentennial Witness Tree; an over 270 year old Willow Oak sitting on top of a small hill. Further ahead, pass the footbridge on the left to James Marx All Veterans Park. The bridge is used on the return route. Ahead, after passing through the long field, there is an option to turn. Going straight is the "Urban Route" of the Holmes Run Trail. Turn left instead to cross Holmes Run on a concrete wash bridge; this is the "Scenic Route." You may get a little wet if it has rained recently. Were you to continue the Holmes Run Trail (see Upper Holmes Run) you would turn right immediately after crossing, going through the tunnels under I-395. Instead, after crossing the creek, go up the stairs straight ahead and bear left to return. A short paved trail ends soon however, an informal and grassy trail continues along Holmes Run. Turn left at the footbridge for the shorter route or make a loop on a gravel trail through James Marx All Veterans Park first, then cross the footbridge and return down the Holmes Run Trail.

Upper Holmes Run (6.05 or 5.7 miles, VI)

This route starts the same as the Lower Holmes Run route. At the split for the “Scenic” and “Urban” routes of the Holmes Run Trail, go straight on the Urban Route. The Urban Route first parallels I-395, then crosses under it at Sanger Ave. Use the sidewalks. At Beauregard St., leave the designated Holmes Run Trail and continue straight. You will climb a little steeper, passing an elementary school on your left. Continuing straight, the road dead ends but an unpaved trail continues into the densely wooded Dora Kelly Nature Park. Stay straight, going downhill and, passing the side trails, then at the point where you would merge onto the paved but otherwise unmarked Holmes Run Trail (just before N. Chambliss St.), make a sharp left turn. The Holmes Run Trail here continues downward, passing a pond, and some rocky areas. Portions of the trail are concrete to prevent washouts from floods. The area is often a little sandy and damp. As you near the creek, an obvious concrete wash bridge crossing on your right is the unmarked Scenic Route. Staying on the left side of the creek lets you use the Urban Route to get back. The Urban Route leaves the creek at Beauregard St. where you can return the way you came. The Scenic route joins the roads briefly to cross Beauregard St., then again disappears into the thick woods. A big dip in the trail drops you to the creek level and straight into a long corrugated pipe tunnel. There are two consecutive tunnels, for each direction of I-395 traffic. Both are long, dark and damp but the second may have as much as an inch deep of unavoidable flowing water in it. Amazingly, I did see some in-line skaters struggling to get through. Had they known what they were in for they would probably have chosen the Urban Route. Emerging into the daylight, turn left across the concrete wash bridge to merge with the Urban Route and then return on the paved trail to Cameron Run.

Portions of the upper Holmes Run Trail from N. Chambliss St. through the tunnels under I-395 are isolated, despite the otherwise urban surroundings. Safety was on my mind. However, once when I got a flat tire when on my bike along Beauregard St., one person was kind enough to ask if I needed assistance. Stick to the lower portion of the trail if you’re nervous about such places.

The Big A (14.05 or 14.35 miles, X)

Alexandria, the big A, is bigger and older than most of the rest of the cities around Washington, D.C. Given its size, it has relatively few paved trails when compared to other area municipalities. Those that it does have are in more urban settings or on roads altogether. This grand tour uses the main trails, except for the Mt. Vernon Trail, to touch on most of the areas of the city. There are plenty of other more scenic long routes in this guide but if you’re in shape and it is near to you, you might find it enjoyable. It is suitable for running or bicycling.

Start by going east along Eisenhower Rd. and down along Cameron Run. The flat sunny trail along Cameron Run is hot in the summer and broken-up only by the overpass of Telegraph Rd. Use sidewalks from this point. Construction in the area is likely to change the route some but look for and turn left on Holland Lane, passing the African American Heritage Park on your right as you do. Sculptures, benches, and its setting near the city’s old cemeteries make the African American Heritage Park a place for reflection. Use the city’s traditional red brick sidewalks to pass through Old Town Alexandria. At the King Street Metro Station, you can see more clearly the towering George Washington Masonic National Memorial in the background. The next few miles are on the sidewalks of Commonwealth Ave. The basically flat road is lined with old

houses; some remodeled, and some not. It is a designated bike route and also the site the Alexandria Turkey Trot, held annually in November. At the end of Commonwealth Ave., turn left on the Wayne F. Anderson Trail. This trail skirts upstream along Four Mile Run. A nature preserve is on the right before you cross Four Mile Run at Mt. Vernon Ave. and join the Four Mile Run Trail in Arlington. To get over I-395, the route and trail turns left on sidewalks into Alexandria again and crosses on a footbridge into Shirlington. At Walter Reed Dr. leave the Four Mile Run Trail and begin to climb on an unnamed paved trail. Just before crossing King St., you may see the white stone marker on your right, on the Arlington/Alexandria border that was once part of the original survey of the District of Columbia that George Washington worked on. The paved trail runs, and you must continue, on street sidewalks up Walter Reed Dr. Turn right to follow the bike route through the Alexandria Campus of the Northern Virginia Community College. The hill or hell (take your choice) is toughest here. Afterward, follow the bike route signs through neighborhoods to the Holmes Run Trail head. On the paved trail, descend quickly through the woods to N. Chambliss St. See the descriptions above for the Upper and Lower Holmes Run Trails to return.

Nearby and Connecting Zones

Belle Haven Park and Marina
Thomas Jefferson Community Center

Bluemont Junction
Daingerfield Island

What to do Afterward

Food and Drink

Generous Georges Positive Pizza & Pasta Place - original store of a longtime area pizza and pasta favorite - 703 370-4303

Chin's Kitchen - flavorful carry out Chinese food - 703 765-4600

Copeland's of New Orleans - 703 671-7997

Entertainment and Edification

George Washington Masonic National Memorial - (703) 683-2007

Fort Ward Museum - (703) 838-4848

Green Spring Gardens Park - ask about the Manor House Gardening & Teas Program - (703) 642-5173

Clark House - 703 938 - 8835

African American Heritage Park - off Duke Street near Old Town Alexandria

Lower Holmes Run

Distance: 3.6 or 4.1 miles

Rating: III; mostly sunny; paved and dirt stream valley trails

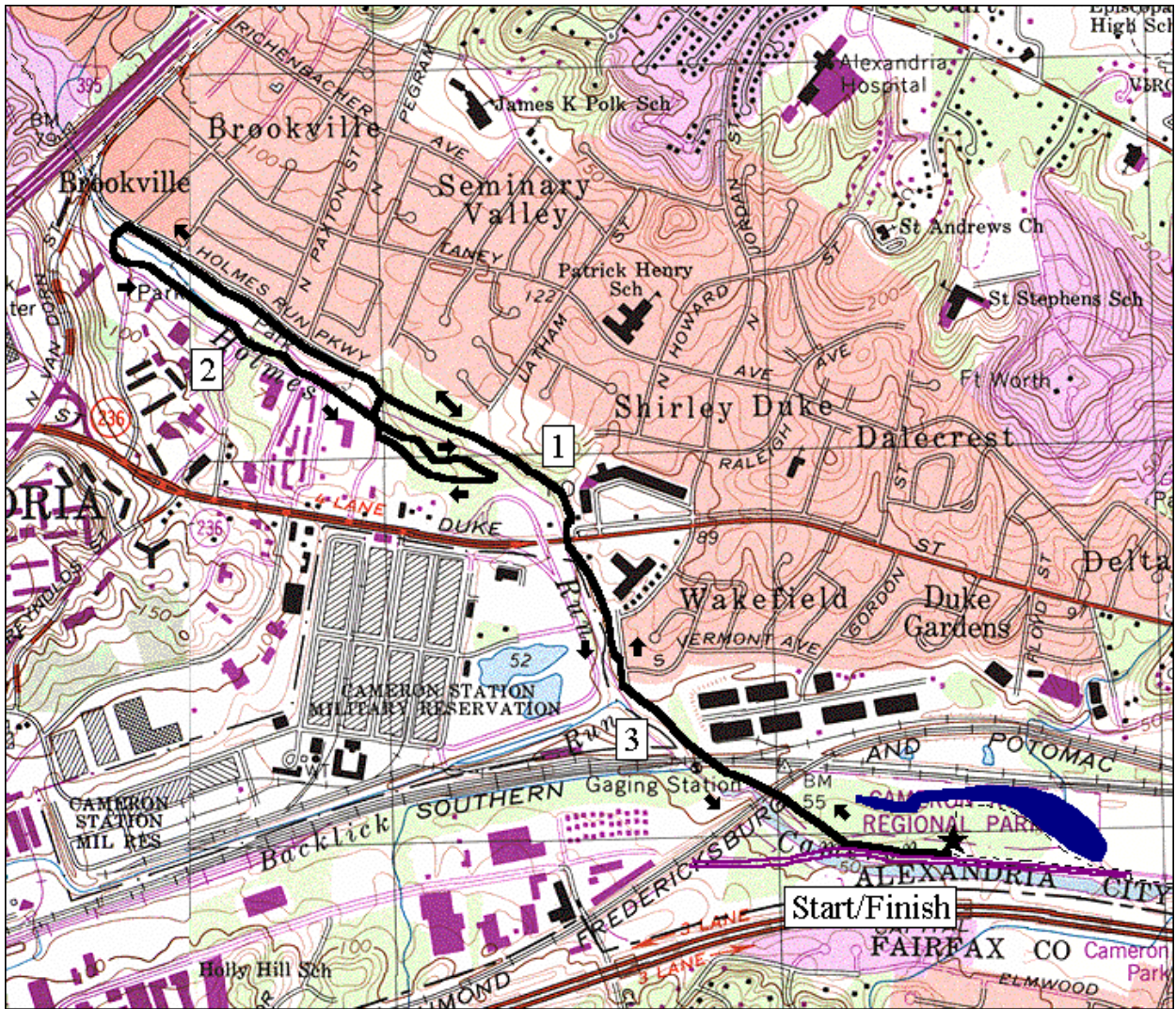
3.6 Mile Route

- R 0.0 on the trail from the parking lot
- BR 0.2 Holmes Run Trail crosses the bridge over the creek
0.6 gate; sign over trail says Tarleton Park
0.9 underpass Duke St
1.1 Bicentennial Oak on R
1.25 bridge to James Marx All Veterans Park on L
- L 1.75 Scenic Route Holmes Run Trail crosses the creek on a concrete wash bridge
- S 1.8 S up the stairs after crossing the creek and follow the trail as it bears L
- BL 1.9 onto dirt/grass trail after N Ripley St on R
<*
- L 2.35 concrete bridge over creek
>*
- R 2.4 Holmes Run Trail at T
2.5 Bicentennial Oak on L
2.7 underpass Duke St
3.0 gate; sign over trail for Tarleton Park
- BL 3.4 Eisenhower Ave
- L 3.6 Cameron Run Regional Park
-

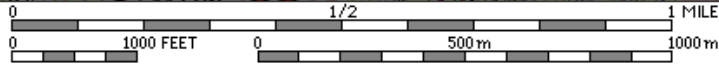
*4.1 Mile Route

- S 2.35 concrete bridge on L; go into James Marx All Veterans Park
- UR 2.6 gravel road merges
- R 2.8 N Pickett St
2.85 concrete bridge over creek (pickup cues at mile 2.4 on 3.6 mile route)

Lower Holmes Run Trail



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Upper Holmes Run

Distance: 6.05 or 5.7 miles

Rating: VI; paved and dirt stream valley trails; mostly sunny

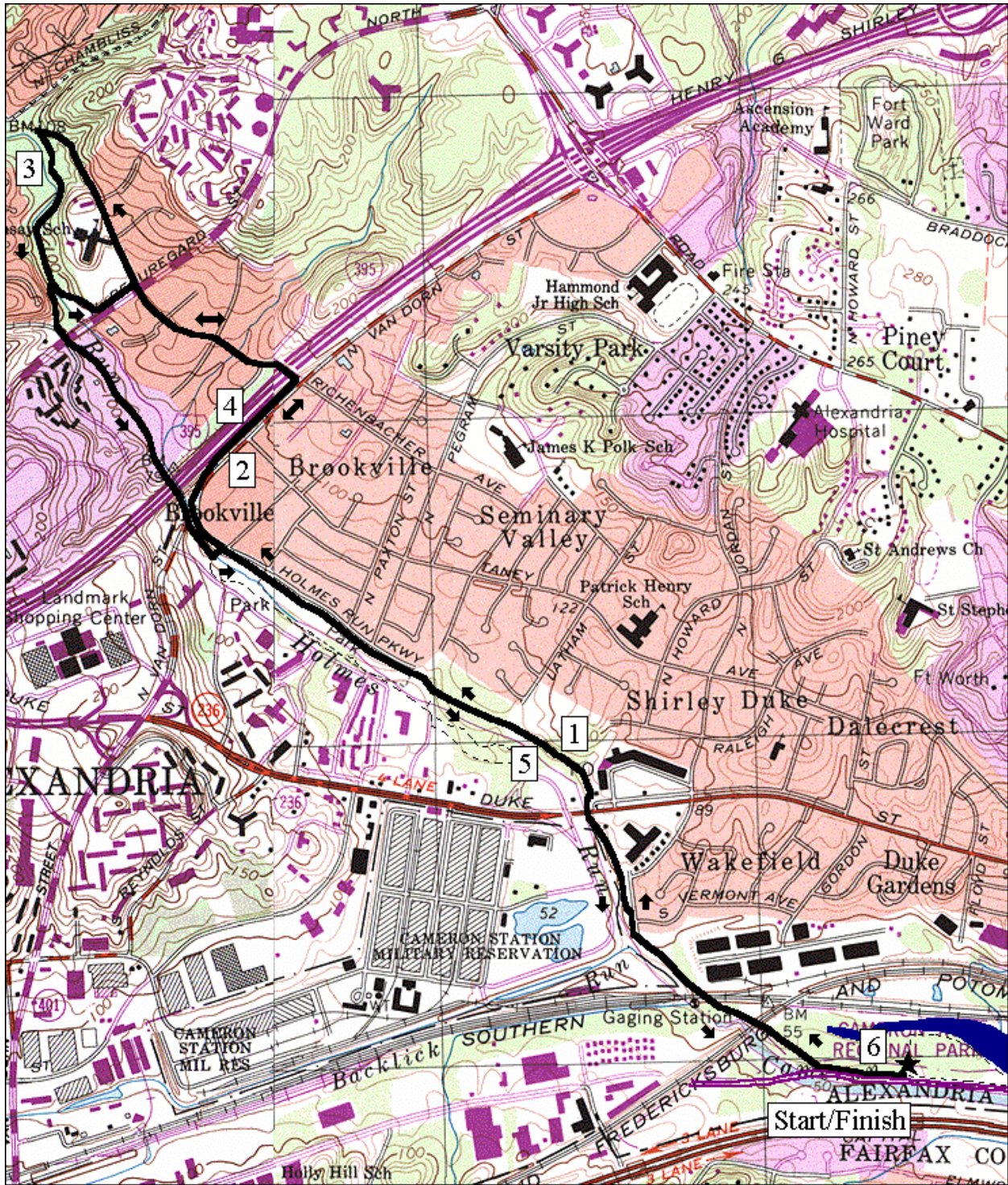
6.05 Mile Route

		<*
R 0.0	on the trail from the parking lot	BL 3.3 to Urban Route of Holmes Run Trail (unmarked); R crosses creek on concrete wash bridge
BR 0.2	Holmes Run Trail crosses the bridge	
0.6	gate; sign over trail for Tarleton Park	L 3.4 Beauregard St
0.9	underpass Duke St	
1.1	Bicentennial Oak on R	R 3.5 Sanger Rd
1.25	bridge to James Marx All Veterans Park on L	R 3.85 Van Dorn St
S 1.75	Urban Route Holmes Run Trail; L crosses the creek on a concrete wash bridge	L 4.15 to trail along Holmes Run Pkwy (!) 4.3 Scenic Route joins from R
CR 1.9	Van Dorn St (!); use gravel sidewalk	>*
L 2.2	Sanger Rd	4.8 bridge to James Marx All Veterans Park on R
2.55	Beauregard St	4.95 Bicentennial Oak on L
2.75	Dora Kelly Nature Trail at the end of Sanger Rd	5.15 underpass Duke St
		5.4 gate; sign over trail for Tarleton Park
L 2.95	Holmes Run Trail (sharp L)	BL 5.85 Eisenhower Ave
		L 6.05 Cameron Run Regional Park

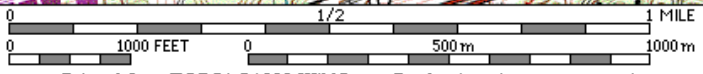
*5.7 Mile Route

		Beauregard St
BR 3.3	to Scenic Route of Holmes Run Trail (unmarked); R crosses creek on concrete wash bridge; L is Urban Route	3.75 begin tunnel (!) 3.8 end tunnel/begin tunnel (! wet) 3.85 end tunnel
L 3.35	N. Morgan St to stay on trail	L/R 3.95 L at T to stay on trail; cross creek on concrete wash bridge; R onto Holmes Run Trail; join Urban Route (pickup cues at mile 4.8 on 6.05 mile route)
BL 3.4	onto trail after crossing	

Upper Holmes Run



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The Big A

Distance: 14.2 or 14.05 miles

Rating: X; paved stream valley trails and city sidewalks

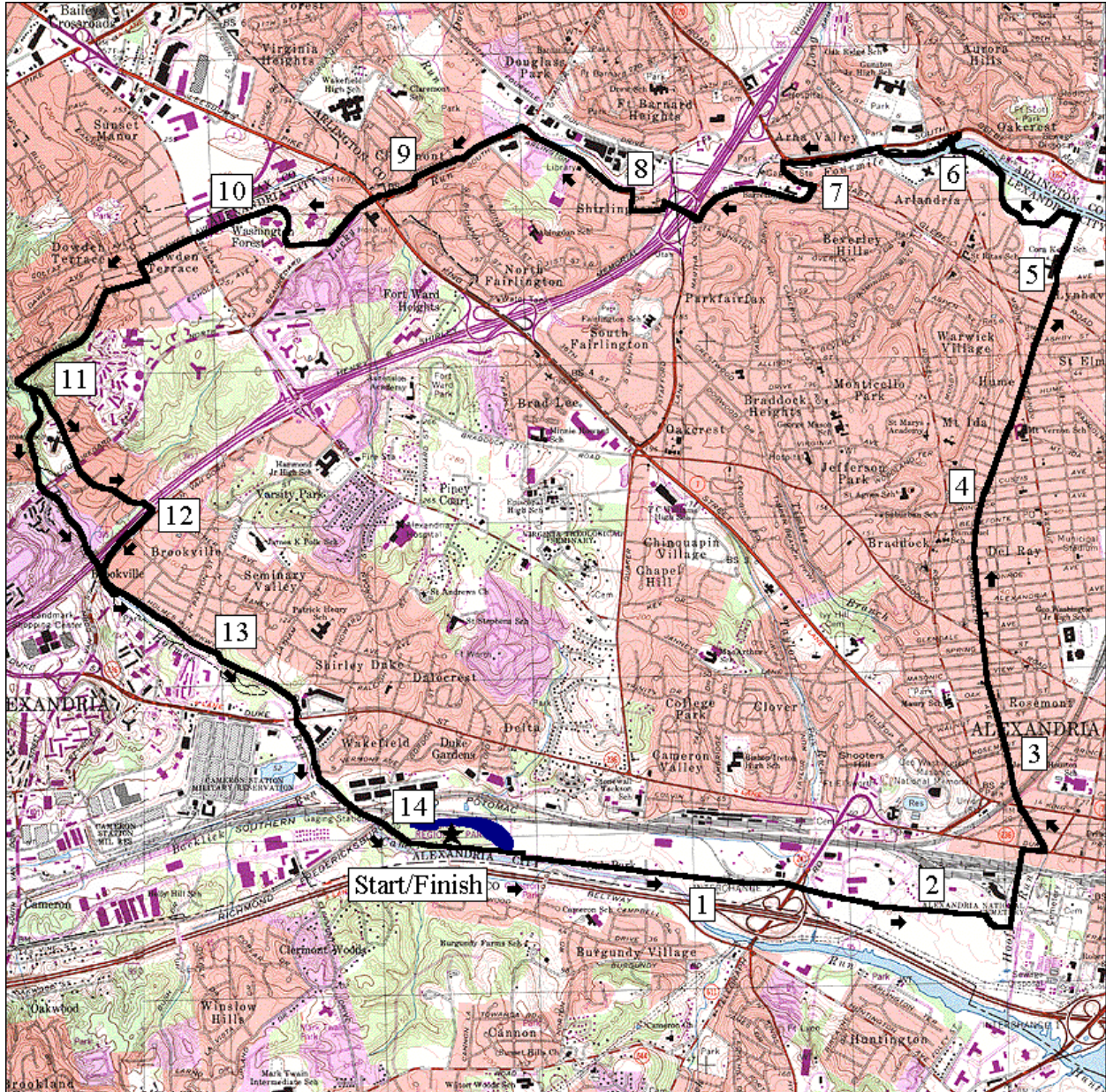
14.2 Mile Route

	R	7.8	28 th St (stores, food, drinks)
L	0.0		on the trail from the parking lot
XS	0.25		at xwalk; Lake Cook on L
	1.3		begin Telegraph Rd overpass
BR	2.2		after Hoof's Run Dr to stay on trail
CL	2.3		Holland La (red brick sidewalk)
R	2.6		Duke St
L	2.7		Daingerfield Rd; becomes Commonwealth Ave at King Street
XS	2.85		at King St, Rte 7 (metro station)
	3.55		E Braddock Rd
	4.45		Mt Vernon Rec Center (water)
	4.6		Mt Vernon Ave
	4.95		W Glebe Rd
XS	5.05		at Walter Reed Ave; Cora Kelly Rec Center
L	5.3		Wayne F Anderson Trail at T
R	6.0		Mt Vernon Ave; cross creek
R	6.05		to Four Mile Run Trail
R	6.1		Four Mile Run Trail (triangle X)
CL	6.85		W Glebe Rd
R	7.0		Valley Dr
BR	7.15		Martha Custis Dr
R	7.6		Gunston Rd; footbridge over I-395
	R	7.95	Randolph St
	CL	8.0	Arl Mill Dr; onto the Four Mile Run Trail
	CL	8.5	Walter Reed Dr
		8.55	Four Mile Run Tr small stone bridge on R
		9.2	King St (Rte 7)
	R/L	9.5	W Braddock Rd/E Campus Dr (hill); follow sidewalk; cut the corner at the top
	L	9.85	Dawes Ave
		10.2	Seminary Rd
	L	10.4	N Stevens St
	CR	10.5	Fillmore Ave; becomes Chambliss St
		10.85	Holmes Run Trail head; end of road
		11.1	onto N Chambliss St at end of trail
	L	11.2	trail head at Dora Kelly Nature Park
		<*	
	BL	11.25	Dora Kelly Nature Trail
		11.45	S on Sanger Rd at trail end
	R	12.0	Van Dorn St
	L	12.3	to trail along Holmes Run Pkwy (!)
		12.45	Scenic Route joins from R
		>*	
		12.95	bridge to James Marx All Veterans Park
		13.3	underpass Duke St
	BL	14.0	Eisenhower Ave
	L	14.2	Cameron Run Regional Park

*14.05 Mile Route

	L	11.7	N. Morgan St to stay on trail
BR	11.25		to stay on trail as Nature Trail goes up on L
	BL	11.75	onto trail after crossing Beauregard St
		12.05	begin tunnels (! wet)
BR	11.6		Scenic Route crosses creek on concrete wash bridge(unmarked); L is Urban Route
	L/R	12.3	cross creek on concrete wash bridge; (pick-up cues at mile 12.95 on 14.2 mile route)

The Big A



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