

LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MASTER PLAN

Facilities, Programming, and Usage Workshop

October 27, 2016

Questions and summary of comments received that evening.

The same questions are available online so that those who were unable to attend the meeting can still add their input to the discussion.

① WHERE DO YOU LIVE AND HOW DO YOU USUALLY COME TO LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?

Attendees were asked to place a dot on a map to reflect where they live, choosing the color dot to indicate their primary mode of transportation to the park.

- 54 dots were added to the map, 45 within the immediate vicinity of Lake Accotink Park, 8 within the limits of Fairfax County, and 1 from outside the county's border.
- 28 **green dots** represented those who walk to the park.
- A total of 12 **yellow dots** represented those who ride a bike to the park (7 in close proximity, 5 within the broader context).
- A total of 11 **blue dots** represented those who drive to the park (7 within close proximity, 4 within the broader context).
- 3 **red dots** represented those who come by other means, although no notation was made what method of transportation is used.

② THE MORE THE MERRIER

Attendees were asked to indicate the size of the group they most often come with to Lake Accotink.

- 17 indicated they most often come on their own.
- 7 indicated they most often come with one other person.
- 6 indicated they tend to come as a family group.
- 7 indicated they come with a few close family or friends.
- 1 indicated they tend to come in a large group.

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

Attendees were asked to indicate the general age bracket of their group when they come to Lake Accotink Park.

- 0 selected the Under 18 category.
- 8 selected the 18-35 category.

- 20 selected the 36-64 category.
- 6 selected the 65 or Better category.
- 9 selected the Multigenerational category.

③ **WHERE DID YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY OF LAKE ACCOTINK PARK TAKE PLACE? PLEASE SHARE THAT MEMORY.**

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF LAKE ACCOTINK PARK IS . . .

- Going bike riding with my grandpa
- My son paddle boated with friends to celebrate his 10th birthday
- My first date with future husband was a walk at Lake Accotink! Later we came with grandkids.
- I chased a copperhead off the trail before anyone hurt it or it bit anyone.
- Seeing wildlife from the pontoon boat
- Taking our scout troops to the park to learn about wildlife in the city
- Rescuing raccoons from dumpsters and trash cans
- More than once this week, the fall weather was so beautifully magnified by the landscape on the Cross County Trail – unforgettable!
- Conquering the small technical rock garden, mountain biking with confidence, and with friends
- Seeing the improvements! Mini-golf, carousel, playground and boat area, Cross County Trail
- I used the path around the lake to help my dog rehab and lose weight. Now I take FCAS dogs there as I foster them. It's beautiful.
- Prepping for all the races during all the seasons, year after year! Yay hills! ☺
- Running a full loop around the lake soon after moving here and feeling so lucky that I would get to do this the rest of my years here.
- Ditto
- Watching the bald eagles in the nest
- Walking my children over the tracks (pre-bridge) off Carrleigh to get to the park
- Watching the cardboard boat race
- Mountain biking with MORE every Thursday evening
- Regardless of weather, walking the trail with dog and as a family, especially during the fall and winter. Really miss the gravel trail – DUMB IDEA TO PAVE!
- Watch coyotes chase a deer on the day after Christmas; picking paw-paws on the back trails in the fall
- Bringing grandkids and have to take off shoes to cross creek by dam
- Watching the Cardboard Boat Regattas

- Participating in conservation projects at the park as a scout – gained an appreciation for how fragile our community treasure really is and how quickly poor maintenance leads to degradation of the entire ecology of the lake and its native flora and fauna
- Going to the lake with my family for the school picnic and Friday night bands in the summertime. We especially loved the German band!
- First view of the lake when we moved here in 1994
- Sunset and twilight along the trail
- While walking with our puppy one steamy morning, we came across a buck. He had a stare down with the pup and then continued on his way.
- Walking from back entrance off of Heming . . . approaching lake on path and hearing the summer band concert – not knowing what it was as I had just moved here.
- Get a sharp bird-in-flight picture at the lake
- I enjoy walking on the nature trail and seeing wildlife – deer and birds
- Picking wild paw paws, enjoying the sunset, running on the trails
- Catching 20 lb. carp in 1970

④ **FACILITIES – EXISTING AND DESIRED**

This station encouraged attendees to complete a survey about park preferences, if they had not already done so. A summary of survey results is available through the Lake Accotink Master Plan project webpage. Individual responses from the evening are not recorded here.

[The survey remains available online](#) to allow people to share what they like about the existing park and what they might like to see in the future. Please feel free to respond to the questionnaire if you have not done so already.

⑤ **NEW FACILITIES**

Results from the park usage and preferences survey have shown that a lot of people are interested in having an off-leash dog area and a disc golf course at Lake Accotink Park.

Attendees were asked that, if an appropriate location could be found, would they like to see these facilities at Lake Accotink Park.

- 18 responded that they would like to see a dog park added.
- 18 responded that they would not like to see a dog park added.
- 16 responded that they would like to see disc golf added.
- 22 responded that they would not like to see disc golf added.

⑥ PROGRAMMING PREFERENCES

Many people come to Lake Accotink Park to enjoy the many types of programming offered. Some programs need facilities or spaces to support them. Knowing what types programs you would like to have available will help us understand space needs in the park.

Attendees were asked to indicate what types of programming they would be interested in and willing to pay a small fee to participate. They could also indicate if they felt a specific programming type was inappropriate for Lake Accotink Park.

PROGRAMMING	WOULD BE INTERESTED AND WILLING TO PAY A SMALL FEE TO PARTICIPATE	WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE THIS PROGRAMMING AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK
Archery	6	5
Concerts/Performances	19	1
Cultural Resource Programs/ History Exploration	16	0
Fishing Programs	4	2
Guided Tour Boat Excursions	7	0
Holiday-themed Events	6	1
Kayaking / Boating Programs	14	1
Large, Community-Focused Events	7	3
Natural Resource Programs/ Nature Exploration	26	1
Pet-Related Programs	7	4
Scout Programs	10	0
Sports/Fitness-Related Programs	11	1
Running/Biking Events	15	4

Some Attendees wrote in additional types of programming for consideration.

PROGRAMMING	WOULD BE INTERESTED AND WILLING TO PAY A SMALL FEE TO PARTICIPATE	WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE THIS PROGRAMMING AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK
Bike Safety Programs	4	0
Competitive Obstacle Course	2	1
Orienteering	3	0
Pokemon-Go	0	3
Ice Skating/Hockey	3	2

Bird Watching	1	0
Art Programs	2	0

Attendees were then asked when programs should be offered to best serve their interests.

PROGRAMMING TIMING	WOULD BE INTERESTED	WOULD NOT PREFER THIS TIME
Weekday Programs	7	2
Weekend Programs	13	0
After Dark Programs	8	3
Summer Camps	9	0
After School Programs	4	1
School Holiday/Teacher Workday Programs	5	0
Day-Trip Programs for Children	4	0

Attendees were also asked if they would like programming focused on a particular age group.

PROGRAMMING	WOULD BE INTERESTED	WOULD NOT BE INTERESTED
Programs for Pre-School Age Children	10	0
Programs for Elementary School Age Children	7	1
Programs for Teenagers	5	2
Programs for Adults	6	3
Programs for Older Adults	7	2
Family/Multigenerational Programs	7	2

⑦ PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS (or at least some pretend money)

Attendees were asked if they had \$1,000 to invest in improving Lake Accotink Park, how would they spend their money. Based on the results of the park usage survey up to the date of the meeting, attendees were offered 10 primary “banks” in which to deposit their money or they could create a new “bank” if they preferred.

AREA OF INVESTMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT INVESTED
Ecological Restoration	\$13,700
Trail Enhancements	\$14,900
Expanded Programming	\$2,500
Off-Leash Dog Area	\$3,200

Enhanced Lakefront Amusements	\$2,000
Disc Golf Course	\$900
Additional Picnic Facilities	\$1,100
Sport Courts	\$500
Additional Restrooms	\$2,400
Archery Range & Programming	\$700

Some additional categories were added by attendees.

AREA OF INVESTMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT INVESTED
Dredging	\$1,000
Bike and Kayak Trail (cut down trees blocking path)	\$100
No WIFI	\$100
Café Upgrade	\$100
Fitness Stations	\$100
Astronomy Nights	\$100
Competitive Obstacle Course	\$100

⑧ **WHY DO YOU COME TO LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?**

- Mostly for exercise – biking, walking – with the family
- Share nature with my family
- Trails
- To go running, to walk in nature, to bike ride with my son, and to enjoy the outdoors and the views of the lake
- To walk my dogs around the lake
- Mountain biking!
- Volunteering, nature conservation, nature restoration
- Running, boating, fishing
- Enjoy the beauty of our park
- The connection to nature through the trails and wooded area and for kayaking the lake
- To walk/run around the trails, to be out with nature
- Bike (now), playground (when kids were smaller), fish (when I was younger)
- Hiking and biking with kids and dog plus the playground
- Running and biking trails, quiet trails, lovely views, no WIFI

- Mountain biking!
- To walk my dog on the trail and let her chase deer
- Get away from technology and run!
- To enjoy peaceful nature
- Concerts, boat rides, nature, peaceful time
- It's convenient, it's large, it's nature-filled
- To walk around the lake and enjoy nature, playground/carousel, boat rides, concerts, picnics
- 1) Walking exercise in a natural setting, 2) concerts, 3) share with visiting friends and family, 4) boats!
- Walk – exercise, nature – animals and birds and plants, concerts
- I come to kike and play mini-golf
- To be by the lake and watch for wildlife
- To walk the dog every day; to run and enjoy fresh air; to clear my head; to show off to family and friends what a wonderful and unique backyard we have
- To run, to walk the dog, to see the flora and fauna, to bring my family and friends to a bit of nature and get exercise in Springfield
- I walk around the lake for exercise and solitude on a regular basis
- To take birds-in-flight pictures
- The lake
- Tranquility, exercise, engagement, fun
- Fitness
- Enjoy nature/nature photography, kayak, walk dogs
- For the chance to be on the trails
- Walk my dogs!
- Run, walk, hike, music, cross country ski (if snow!)
- For exercise, to enjoy time with my family
- The lake!

WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO COME TO LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MORE OFTEN?

- Improved trails
- Better marked trails, directions for bikers/runners to connect with the other trails/how not to get lost in neighborhoods while running
- Stop bow hunting!

- No paved trails! Ecological Restoration/stabilize stream and prevent erosion. Thanks for bringing back trash cans!
- More nature walks
- Places to hang out in woods where I would see no one else
- No more trail paving! Enforce dog leash regulations!
- More natural surface trails
- Dredging the lake!!
- More/improved trails
- A bench or two given that I usually walk in from Carrleigh
- Improve the trails to a natural setting; more solitude would be helpful
- No more trail paving, focus on ecological restoration, no more tree clearing, natural resource conservation
- Night access for mountain biking
- Fewer crowds; easy parking – boat parking only by the marina (that is, you can only park there if you bring your own boat); knowing I wouldn't get stuck in traffic getting to the park
- Historic signs and overlooks to show my son; he would probably like a better snack bar
- Nature programs
- Enforce dog leash regulations
- More trash cans! 😊
- Campfires – weekend night programs
- Keep the concerts, add trail-side exercise equipment
- Theatre in the park
- As a destination . . . for hanging – pick up trash, better concession offerings, nicer marina area. Otherwise, I enjoy the trails and spend plenty of time on them. For my kids, programs, camps
- More Daisy Scout activities, more community activities, nice weather
- Better condition of the trail system to other amenities (Metro, Swiss Bakery, shopping center)
- More than everyday seems excessive but bike speed seems to be an issue
- Outdoor classes/walking tours
- More running/connected trails
- More benches in the hilly areas- nice for grandparents and grandkids
- More variety of birds and closer way to watch/take pictures of birds
- Less trash and rubbish, lower lot area is used for car cleaning

- Campfire, story hour
- Botanical garden like Green Spring
- Orks and Zombies
- Concerts

⑨ **WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?**

- Keep natural beauty but add restrooms and benches on trail.
- The peaceful place I'll be able to walk with my children and dog during the day. Where I can teach them about animals, nature, and conservation. And a place where my husband and I can enjoy a beautiful run together.
- I would like to see less lake and more loop trails with bridges over the creek and a boardwalk over a smaller lake (like Huntley Meadows). There would be historic signs and you would be able to see the historic culverts and railroad tunnel
- Wildlife refuge area
- A park that will be enjoyed and used for generations to come – save the park!!!
- My four boys and my husband and myself to run or bike safely to our hearts' content.
- Ice skate in the winter. Walk to Swiss Bakery for hot cocoa and come back at dusk for a camp fire and music. Meet friends for an autumn hike or summer swim in the lake.
- Keep it a lake park. Restore nature throughout.
- Keeping a sustainable, natural area. Improve public education on being a good neighbor – no dumping, littering, reduce impermeable surfaces and lawns (helps water quality), reduce lawn chemicals.
- Ecological, archaeological, cultural programs. Dredging. Trail upgrades in specific areas but not concrete.
- A place where young people can learn from old and cut loose or hand out without supervision or structured time.
- A place to get away from it all, to reconnect with nature and look at the beautiful lake! Dredge it!
- An outdoor natural area where my family and I can exercise, enjoy nature, be outside in a stress-free environment with wildlife and other natural things only possible around a lake.
- An efficient park with a fixed sedimentation problem and returning wildlife, namely freshwater mussels.
- Make the park areas more joined together. Too broken up in current configuration.
- More trails. More Interpretive and archaeological (illegible).
- DREDG!! DREDG!! DREDG!! (sic)
- More nature. Areas for activities are good as is. Replace asphalt trails.

- Keep the lake and surrounding area as rustic and natural as possible.
- A park with a lake (of some size) to walk to and through with my grown children and ultimately grandchildren to view nature at its best.
- We need a park with a lake. Maybe we can't keep the lake that we have, but even if it is smaller, it will anchor the park in the community.
- A place where my family can continue to experience nature without having to drive. We use all assets of the park.
- An oasis of nature in the DC Metro area.
- Maintain excellence. I bought my house here two years ago because of its proximity to the park.
- A location should be set aside for a bicycle safety school since it is on the cross county trail. Safe trail on access road.
- Keep multi-surfaces for running and biking. Please do not pave all trails! It's hard on old knees!
- Please keep the natural character of Lake Accotink Park. If structures are replaced, make them natural and sustainable in look and feel and operation. The environment is #1 here!
- Keep playgrounds, mini-golf, and trails.
- I would love to see the park as it is, maintained and kept up. It is a wonderful park with just enough activities to stay entertained while still keeping the nature focus with trails and nature.
- Improve facilities, keep lake and trails and woods clean and help preserve the ecology and wildlife of the lake and surrounding areas. Please don't remove the lake!!!
- We need to protect the natural resources that we have left. We should not disturb any more land for each type of activity that some special-use group wants. There isn't enough land at LAP to do that. The land should be a place to come and be restored in health and spirit. It's not an amusement park. We need it for future generations, and setting the example now that we will cater to each special-use group means we will have no natural land left soon.

⑩ **SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS**

Attendees were invited to share any other thoughts or suggestions about the Lake Accotink Park Master Plan.

- Too bad more people didn't show. The park is used by many – Dredge the lake!!
- Thanks – The current park is really excellent. Concentrate on maintaining existing features rather than creating a second Audrey Moore. The lake and trail are the anchor and the character – would not mess with what has been working. Programs to get more kids (the future) are good. No WIFI or digital stuff – those folk can stay home – or leave their devices home.

- 1) Stop paving trails – in addition to creating impervious surfaces which increase speed of stormwater run-off which contributes to the soil erosion – paving of the trails seems to have given bike riders a license to speed – endangering walkers/hikers/kids and dogs. STOP PAVING!!! 2) Lake Accotink’s surrounding communities are dog friendly – a properly designed – walk to off leash dog area (dog park) with grass or other permeable surface (recycle synthetic turf from athletic playing fields) – seek corporate grants – sell naming rights – solicit or require paid membership to provide funds needed to establish & maintain such area. 3) Concentrate on restoration of natural environment.
- Misuse of park is often by folks who aren’t participating in the planning of parks. Example: excessive litter and trash in from picnic people and others who come in to clean vehicle. Please consider outreach to non-English speaking community – signs about littering in Spanish, Vietnamese, Hindi, Arabic, Korean, Chinese, etc. More signage about litter in lower level parking lot. More signs/pictographic about trail etiquette, ex. “Say hi”, “Stay to the right”, “no headphones”, “don’t litter” . . . Dog walkers and people with headphones are a safety issue. Signs in multiple languages. Outreach to non-English speaking community through their churches, temples, etc. about trash in the watershed, opportunities in park to *(illegible)*.