

To Participants in the White Horticultural Park Master Plan Process:

First, thank you for your active participation in this planning process. It is important to the Park Authority Board and the project team to fully consider public input during the planning process. The public input for this master plan has already provided a diverse range of views. I recognize that this future park represents change to your community and it requires that we all work together to make this park a community treasure and resource.

Secondly, I am writing to follow up with an update of the plan status and the proposed next steps.

The last public workshop was held on July 21 and was attended by approximately 150 people. The workshop presentation, handouts, frequently asked questions, meeting summary and group reports can be found on the project website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/whiteworkshop.htm>

The workshop was designed to gain public input on the crucial issues for this master plan, specifically preferences on park uses and entrance options. Each facilitated group had group record sheets and maps on which a volunteer recorded each group's input and another volunteer reported the group's input to the entire audience. This simple workshop design assumed that the written and oral reports would be consistent and reflected in the written records and maps. As intended, these written report sheets were used as the source material for the summary and included in an electronic link on the website. Individuals can and should review this material and draw their own conclusions.

As for the request for cost estimates for each possible entrance, many factors are involved. Without preparing costly detailed engineered plans, cost estimates for planning purposes are not exact. Emergency access and ADA requirements further determine how access is constructed. Detailed engineered plans are not required for a Park Master Plan but will be completed when the development project is funded, scoped and scheduled. Development cannot take place until the Park Authority has possession of the property and funding for development. However, based on staff knowledge and past experience, we can provide a relative ranking of estimated costs for each of the alternative entrances. As of now and based on these relative cost estimates, the least expensive option appears to be Goldsboro; followed by Kerns and Horseman. Princess Anne and Rolfs appear to be the most expensive options, due to off-site improvements that may be required.

While the cost factor is important, we must also look at other factors, such as the road and site conditions; how the entrance serves the site and future park visitors, emergency and ADA access requirements and the impacts on park resources and neighbors. Adequate parking needs to be provided so park patrons do not park along residential streets. Community concerns and issues raised during the process, such as security, safety, traffic and legal restrictions and ramifications, also need careful consideration and balancing.

The Park Authority Board will ultimately approve the Master Plan after a public hearing. The public hearing will allow all individuals to provide input on the draft Master Plan.

Since the entrance options are complex, I have consulted with the Park Board Executive Committee who advise that they would prefer that the Board hear all the public input at the public hearing on various entrance options before they make a decision. Therefore, the draft Master Plan will include several entrance options on which the public may provide comments.

Therefore, our best estimate at this time of the next steps in the process and the timelines will be:

October: Consultant completes horticultural landscape report and project team drafts master plan

November: Project team completes the draft Master Plan

December: Staff presents draft Master Plan to Park Authority Board and requests authorization to hold a public hearing

December/January: Notification of public hearing for at least 30 days

January: Public hearing held followed by a 30-day open comment period

March: Final Master Plan presented to Park Authority Board for consideration and approval.

This schedule will avoid conflicts with holidays and provide maximum opportunity for public participation. If there is a change to the schedule, we will notify you.

I invite you to work constructively with the Park Authority through the public planning process as we bring the Park Master Plan forward. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Frank S. Vajda
Mason District Representative
Fairfax County Park Authority Board