

# Merrilee Park

## Park Master Plan

Public Information Meeting, April 25, 2011  
Luther Jackson Middle School

### Meeting Summary

A Public Information Meeting was held on the evening of April 25, 2011 for the purpose of increasing public awareness of the project and the park master planning process as well as to invite public comment and input toward the park's future design.

### Introductions and Opening Remarks

#### In attendance:

Linda Smyth  
Ken Quincy

Supervisor, Providence District  
Park Authority Board, Providence District

#### Park Authority Staff

Dave Bowden  
Sandy Stallman  
Gayle Hooper  
Ed Busenlehner  
Patricia Stevenson  
Richard Sacchi

Director, Planning and Development Division (PDD)  
Manager, Park Planning Branch, PDD  
Project Manager, Park Planning Branch, PDD  
Manager, Area 1 Operations  
General Manager, Providence RECenter  
Heritage Resource Specialist, Cultural Resource Protection Branch

### Staff Presentation ([add hyper link to presentation](#))

#### Overview

Sandy Stallman provided an outline of the evening's agenda as well as an overview of Fairfax County Park Authority and the Park Master Plan process.

#### Site Conditions and Background

Gayle Hooper, Project Manager for the Merrilee Park Master Plan, provided a brief history of the property, some local context and description of the site.

#### Public Comments:

After the staff presentation, a period of open discussion was provided to allow those in attendance to share their thoughts and suggestions for Merrilee Park. A summary of the suggestions and concerns is provided below.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

- Several people commented that they would like to see the site developed with the intent to serve both the residents of the area as well as the office

workforce. Many of the offices in the area have lots of concrete around the buildings but offer little in terms of shade or sitting areas.

- o Suggestion was made to establish a trail along the sound wall beyond the limits of the park property that would permit area residents and workforce to have a place to walk away from Hartland Road.
- o Mention was made of the number of small children in the area that need a place to play. Children often play in the streets to find an area of sufficient size to kick a ball or ride a bike. This is a safety issue particularly in light of the traffic volume and speed along Hartland Road and Providence Forest Drive.

#### FUTURE PARK USES / FEATURES

##### Off-leash Dog Park

- o It was noted that the adjacent apartment development seems to offer a variety of recreational options to their residents but that there is need for some sort of dog park.
- o Merrifield at Dunn Loring Apartments has a small dog-run area (approximately 20' by 10') but that this does not adequately address the needs of the area's dog owners.

##### Skateboard facilities

- o Suggestion was made to include some skateable areas, particularly for young teens. Area children often try to use paved areas within the developments that area not appropriate for skating. Particularly, the middle school age bracket is often poorly served. Recreation opportunities, particularly skate facilities, are needed within walking distance of their homes to permit a level of accessible independence.
- o Suggestion was made to consider opportunities to provide skating elements in coordination with local office sites during non-business hours that already provide large, paved areas.
- o Skate elements, which can be noisy, could be located closer to the Beltway which would be the noisier portion of the park.

##### Open Play Area / Garden Plots

- o There seems to be a variety of recreational opportunities open to local residents (i.e., playgrounds, basketball, tennis); however, there is a lack of broad, open areas for general play.
- o Suggestion was made to include community garden plots as part of the plan. This use could work with the existing site conditions and require minimal increase in impervious surface. Suggestion was made to consider developing half of the site as garden plots and half as an open play area.

#### PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

- o Several in attendance mentioned concern that safe pedestrian connections be established to bring people to the park, particularly in light of the potential redevelopment of Hartland Road as a loop road.

- o Local residents as well as work force look for and enjoy pedestrian routes through the area. Merrilee Park offers an opportunity to provide a pedestrian destination, possibly providing benches or picnic tables.