

Public comment provided to EQAC 09/11/2024 from Amy Gould

Americana Drive is one of the most densely populated and vulnerable areas in this county because of its proximity to 495. I have attached a map of Accotink Creek, my previous presentation for your reference, and an environmental justice mapper from EPA here: <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>

This is an area with layers of problems and addressing even one of them would help.

If you look at historical maps of the county from the 2003 timeframe you will see that none of these problems existed on Americana Drive. But when the hotlanes project went in VDOT removed trees to put in soundwalls and moved the trees back from 3 to 10 feet from the curb. This community has never recovered from that change because it invited the dumping and the parking chaos.

Above the curb parking is churning the soil that ends up in Accotink Creek, and, of course, every property owner in Fairfax County is paying taxes to restore Accotink Creek from the top down.

But there is a reason people park above the curb -- Americana Drive is not wide enough for two cars to pass in the street if there is parking on both sides. People are trying to protect the one asset they own. Limiting parking to one side of the street and pushing the curbs back in areas on the other side for larger vehicles and adding pervious pavers to help with stormwater would improve safety and be a better solution than what is happening now. VDOT has said they would approve a TAP grant at a Tier 3 level, and it would be safer for pedestrians crossing the street and allow for car unloading in a safer location as opposed to the way it is now.

For the dumping, opening the transfer station in Merrifield to those who live and work on the eastern side of the county and to those who do not own tipping trucks might be a solution. Right now, you can only use the transfer station if you own a tipping truck and very few of the laborers do. Additionally, DPWES could charge for usage of the landfill through the permit process rather than collecting it at the landfill.

- Putting tall fencing to prevent debris being thrown into Accotink Creek would be most helpful.
- Signage not allowing parking above the curb would be a starting point.
- Taxpayers also get to pay for the crushed storm drains that exist all along Americana and Patriot Drive. If they are not already crushed, they will be from the weight of the vehicles parking on top of them.
- waiving the "in perpetuity" clause in the VDOT permit language – at least for Americana Drive -- and moving the tree line back to three feet from the curb would also help and would allow for tree planting to help restore that area and eliminate the dumping and the parking issues.

A county should not allow communities which once were peaceful and safe to deteriorate into the chaos that exists there now, whether it be parking chaos, driving chaos, criminal chaos, or dumping chaos. The residents who live there are county residents and deserve better. Still, years go by and no one does anything. Frankly I expect more from my government.

