

LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MASTER PLAN REVISION

LAKE SUSTAINABILITY PRESENTATION AND WORKSHOP SESSION

MAY 16, 2016

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

As a continuation of the public outreach effort for the Lake Accotink Master Plan Revision, a public workshop was held on May 16, 2016 at Kings Glen Elementary school and focused primarily on options to enhance the sustainability of Lake Accotink. The meeting included a presentation of the preliminary research done as part of the Lake Accotink Sustainability Plan and a workshop session to gain the community's input relating to the Study's alternatives.

The meeting started at 7:00 and was facilitated by Judy Pedersen, FCPA Public Information Officer. The names of 97 attendees were captured on the sign-in sheets. Also in attendance were:

- Pat Herrity, Springfield District Supervisor
- Jordan Barrack, staff representative for Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay
- Lindsey Smith, staff representative for Braddock District Supervisor John Cook
- Tony Vellucci, Park Authority Board, Braddock District representative
- Ed Batten, Park Authority Board, Lee District Representative
- Mike Thompson, Park Authority Board, Springfield District Representative
- Mary Cortina, Park Authority Board, Member-at-Large
- Aimee Vosper, Park Authority Deputy Director, CBD
- Dave Bowden, Park Planning and Development Director
- Park Authority staff and members of the master plan team.

STAFF / CONSULTANT PRESENTATION

Gayle Hooper, project manager for the Lake Accotink Master Plan Revision, provided a brief history of the park and the long-standing issue of sedimentation of the lake.

Frank Graziano, Professional Engineer and Director of Engineering at Wetland Studies and Solutions (WSSI), presented several alternative methods of addressing the sedimentation issue along with some context of the Accotink Creek Watershed.

The presentation, including the five alternatives discussed, is available on-line for viewing at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/lakeaccotink.htm>.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SESSION

Following the presentation on lake management alternatives, the audience was divided into eight working groups. Each group selected a member to be the team scribe as well as a spokesman to briefly report out on the working group's discussion at the end of the evening.

The intended goal of the group discussion was not to establish any consensus of opinion, but, to gain the benefit of the input from a broad variety of stakeholders. Supported by a staff facilitator and materials, the working groups were given approximately 45 minutes to discuss the following questions:

1. Each of the lake sustainability alternatives presented tonight included a listing of considerations. From your perspective, what other considerations should be included to help the Park Authority fairly evaluate each alternative?

2. Are there additional strategies that could take place within the limits of Lake Accotink Park that your group would suggest to improve the health and sustainability of the existing lake?

After the group discussion period ended, the selected team spokesman for each group provided approximately a three to five minute overview of the team's discussion. Below is a compiled summary of the written and oral comments from the working groups. Comments reflect a range of viewpoints and some comments are in direct opposition to others. Many of the discussion points punctuate the need for expanded study to further evaluate the alternatives.

Question 1 Each of the lake sustainability alternatives presented tonight included a listing of considerations. From your perspective, what other considerations should be included to help the Park Authority fairly evaluate each alternative?

Each alternative should ultimately be evaluated to consider:

- the impacts to recreational uses within the park;
- the visual impact of each alternative (aesthetics);
- impacts to wildlife;
- impacts to pest populations (mosquitos);
- impacts to other FCPA parks;
- impacts to park visitation/usage/programming at Lake Accotink Park;
- changes in flood control;
- the sustainability of each option;
- how each alternative addresses EPA rulings;
- the impact to property values for homes nearby the lake;
- project and lifecycle costs;
- how each alternative will address pending DEQ regulations

General comments and considerations:

- Some felt that alternatives that eliminate sediment capture, such as with Alternatives D and E, should not even be considered.
- Some felt that, regardless of expense, the lake must be maintained.
- Concern was stated that removing the lake would lead to development at Lake Accotink Park similar to that at Wakefield Park.
- The lake provides natural beauty
- There was general concern about the effects of passing sediment downstream.
- The aspect of the deposition of the dredge material (impacts to neighborhoods) needs to be evaluated in detail.
- Wildlife should be a driver in the final decision, not an afterthought.
- The lake provides needed recreation options to this portion of the county.
- Are there other similar projects around the country that could provide additional clarity to the evaluation such as cost, time to implement, results, lessons learned, and funding sources?
- What other DPWES projects will impact the watershed and choices?
- What would be the funding source? How would such a project impact taxes?
- Who will make the final decision on how to address the lake?

- Any option selected must prove to be sustainable.
- What outside funding sources are available? Lake Accotink provides sediment removal for all upstream areas and should not be the sole responsibility of the Park Authority to address its removal.

Comments applicable more directly to a specific alternative

- **Alternative A**
 - Previous dredging efforts don't appear to have made the lake any deeper.
 - Dredging operations majorly disrupt usage of the park

- **Alternative B**
 - Alternative seems rather unobtrusive
 - Alternative seems easier to maintain than Alternative A
 - This seems like a pragmatic solution

- **Alternative C**
 - Alternative provides too short term of an answer to be viable
 - Might create plateaus of meadows
 - May be worth considering in combination with other alternatives
 - Seems like a good natural solution
 - Would large trees damage the beaver dams if they fell during a flood?

- **Alternative D**
 - Would provide more marshland area that would increase biodiversity, great for bird-watching
 - Alternative would still provide good hiking opportunities
 - This alternative changes everything about the park
 - Dam removal would restore movements of migratory fish
 - Dam removal may negatively impact freshwater mussel population
 - Appears to be the least expensive alternative

- **Alternative E**
 - Would provide more marshland that would increase biodiversity, great for bird-watching
 - Would still provide good hiking opportunities
 - Retains recreation (boating), enhances wildlife and stream flow
 - Boat rides would be shorter
 - Retains option for the Cardboard Boat Regatta
 - Dam removal would restore movements of migratory fish
 - Dam removal may negatively impact freshwater mussel population
 - Seems like a novel idea
 - Several felt that this option was a good blending of addressing various goals; a novel approach

Question 2 Are there additional strategies that could take place within the limits of Lake Accotink Park that your group would suggest to improve the health and sustainability of the existing lake?

- Consider combining several of the alternatives (e.g. beaver dams and sediment forebay);
- Should we be thinking Accotink Park rather than Lake Accotink Park?
- An ideal solution would be to never need to dredge again.
- Consider more woods, less lake.
- Stop dredging efforts and let the site return to a stream condition, either naturally or controlled.
- Relocate sediment capture to an area that is easier to access (e.g. closer to Braddock Road)
- Pursue stream restoration projects upstream of the lake to prevent/reduce sediment from entering the lake
- Install plant material that absorbs water, create floating wetlands
- Is there a cost benefit to dredging deeper than 8'? How would this affect the lifespan of the dredge?

Some discussion focused on the issue of removing the dredge material from the park.

- With the forebay alternatives, could a permanent dredge system provide constant sediment removal, rather than annually or biennially?
- Are there possibilities to utilize the existing rail lines to transport dredge material out of the park?
- Is there an option to sell or give away the dredge material, rather than trucking it from site?
- Can the dredge material be used to build beaver dams?
- Utilize dredge material to cover areas of the park that are effected by invasive plant species and eliminate them.